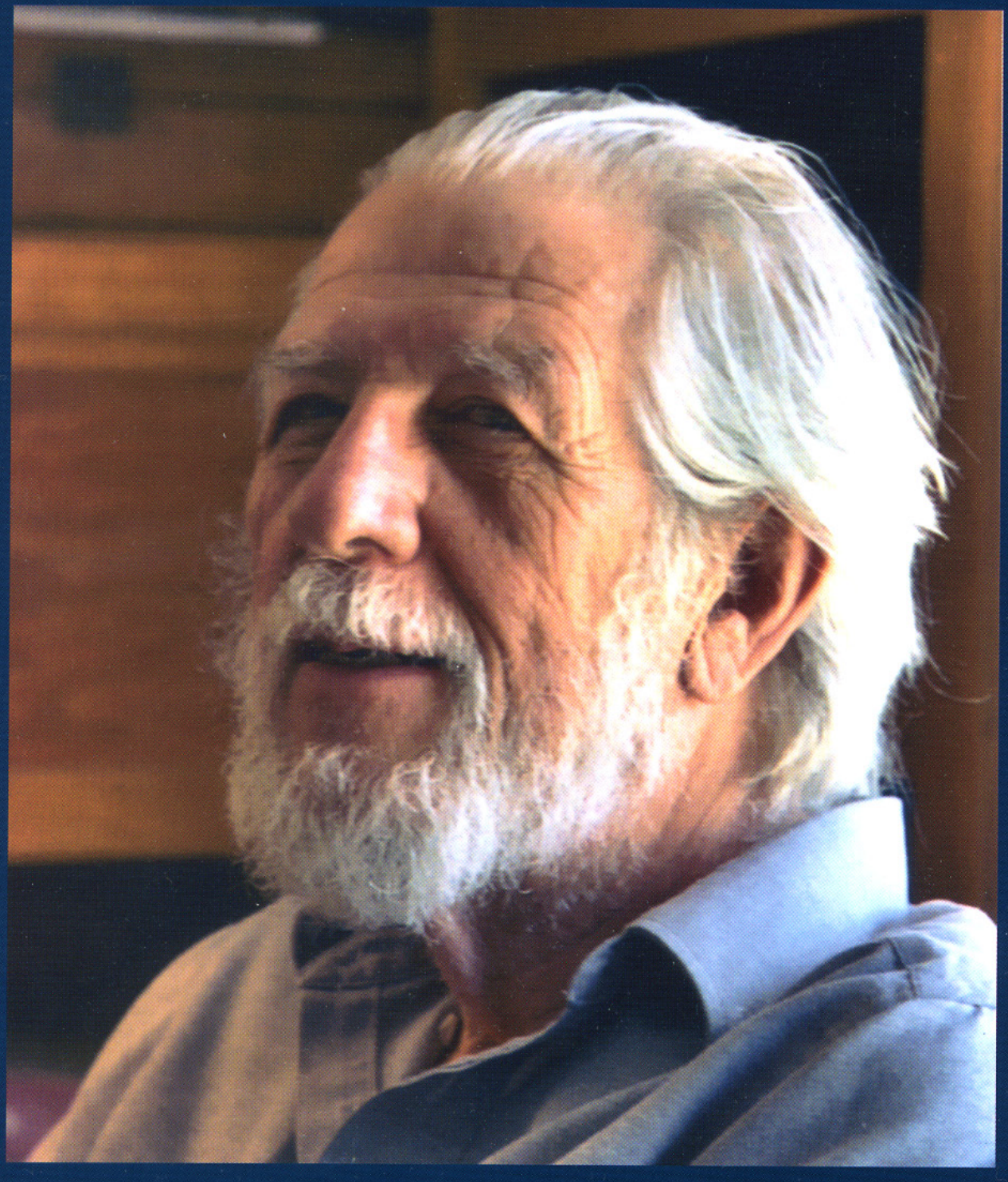
Elmer Rusco



NOT LIKE A RIVER

THE MEMOIR OF AN ACTIVIST ACADEMIC

Not Like a River:
The Memoir of an Activist Academic

Interviewee: Elmer Rusco
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Description

Elmer Rusco was professor emeritus of the Political Science Department at the University of Nevada, Reno. Readers of this memoir will gain insight into the exceptional scope of Professor Rusco's contributions, and his extraordinary, lifelong commitment to advancing the cause of social justice. Few Nevadans have dedicated so much time and effort to progressive organizations. Each such association, and the causes they champion, owes a great deal to this man from Kansas who chose to spend more than four decades in Nevada.

Rusco was one of a handful of volunteer leaders that sustained the American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada from its founding in 1966 to 1985. In the 1970s he served as the organization's state president and held together its northern and southern chapters. Today the ACLU of Nevada has arguably emerged as the state's leading human rights advocacy group.

Part of the founding group of the University of Nevada's Department of Political Science when it separated from the History Department in 1963, Professor Rusco helped establish the reputation of that faculty for teaching, public service, and mentoring— qualities that are frequently cited by its alumni four decades later. The University of Nevada, Reno campus has always had faculty who take full advantage of opportunities to be active in community, state, and national organizations, both as a way to fulfill their own sense of social responsibility and as a means to achieve particular political goals. Dr. Rusco is among those who have sustained highly diverse and effective commitments to groups and causes in the Silver State and nationally. He has been involved with organizations committed to the environment (Friends of Rancho San Rafael and Friends of Pyramid Lake), religion (the Unitarian Universalists), civil rights (the ACLU Nevada and the Northern Nevada Black Cultural Awareness Society), political reform (Common Cause), legal aid (Washoe Legal Services), direct help for the poor (Community Services Agency and Habitat for Humanity), and much more.

All but one of these organizations survives today, and the leaders of each can recall myriad contributions from Elmer Rusco. For one (Habitat) he raised hundreds of thousands of dollars in support. For some others he gave ten or twenty years of work that ranged from vital organizational management to wise counsel and amiable leadership.

Dr. Rusco's interview provides exceptional insight into how his religious, personal, and political philosophy was shaped. His roots are in rural Kansas, but key life experiences include a cattle-boat excursion that spanned several continents, a Midwesterner's encounters with the Jim Crow South, and his undergraduate involvement with CORE, the Council for Racial Equality, in and around Lawrence, Kansas.

For Professor Rusco, "retirement" in 1986 gave him the time to become the state's leading authority on Nevada's civil rights legacy and its struggle with racism. He was able to complete monumental studies on federal Indian

(Continued on next page.)

Description (continued)

policy and on the experience of Nevada's Chinese residents, in addition to a myriad of published studies on poverty and the black experience in the Silver State. Professor Rusco leaves us with his articles, his books, and files for his successors to rummage through for their own research at the Nevada Historical Society and UNR's Special Collections Department.

This published work is the summation of Elmer Rusco's life in civil liberties and civil rights and his pursuit of legal and historical truth—the legacy of a man orphaned in Kansas, who contributed so much to the history and conscience of his adopted state of Nevada.

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THE MEMOIR OF AN ACTIVIST ACADEMIC

Elmer Rusco,
with R.T. King

University of Nevada Oral History Program

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University of Nevada Oral History Program
Reno, Nevada 89557-0099
ohp@unr.nevada.edu
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Publication Staff:
Director: R.T. King
Assistant Editor & Production Manager: Kathleen Coles
Assistant Director: Mary Larson
Production Assistants: Pedro Oiarzabal, Linda Sommer, and Kathryn Wright-Ross

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Preface

Since 1964, the University of Nevada Oral History Program (UNOHP) has been collecting an eyewitness account of Nevada's remembered past. While there is no standard chronicler profile nor rigid approach to interviewing, each oral history plumbs human memory to gain a better understanding of the past. Following the precedent established by Allan Nevins at Columbia University in 1948 (and perpetuated since by academic programs such as ours throughout the English-speaking world), these manuscripts are called oral histories. Some confusion surrounds the meaning of the term. To the extent that these "oral" histories can be read, they are not oral, and while they are useful historical sources, they are not themselves history. Still, custom is a powerful force; historical and cultural records that originate in tape-recorded interviews are almost uniformly labeled "oral histories," and our program follows that usage.

In April of 2004, Dr. R.T. King, director of the UNOHP, conducted a series of interviews with Dr. Elmer Rusco. This book is crafted from the verbatim transcript of those interviews. Remaining faithful to their contents, and adhering as closely as possible to Dr. Rusco's spoken words, Dr. King has composed this narrative, and Dr. Rusco has reviewed the manuscript and affirms that it is an accurate interpretation. Readers who desire access to the unaltered oral history are invited to visit the offices of the UNOHP, where the tapes of the interviews may be heard by appointment.

To add context to written representations of the spoken word, the UNOHP uses certain editorial conventions. Amusement or laughter is represented with [laughter] at the end of the sentence; and ellipses are used, not to indicate that material has been deleted, but to indicate that a statement has been interrupted or is incomplete . . . or there is a pause for dramatic effect.

As with all of our oral histories, while we can vouch for the authenticity of *Not Like a River*, we advise the reader to keep in mind that it is an account of a remembered past, and we do not claim that it is entirely free of error. Intelligent readers will approach it with the same anticipation of discovery, tempered with caution, that they would bring to government reports, diaries, newspaper stories, and other interpretations of historical information.

UNOHP
June 2004

Introduction

Readers of this book will gain insight into the exceptional scope of Professor Elmer Rusco's work and contributions, as well as the reasons for his extraordinary, lifelong commitment to advancing the cause of social justice. Few Nevadans have dedicated so much time and effort to progressive organizations. Each such association, and the causes they champion, owes a great deal to this man from Kansas who chose to spend more than four decades in Nevada.

A good way to understand the impacts of Elmer Rusco is to play the game familiar from the movie, *It's a Wonderful Life*. Without Elmer, the American Civil Liberties Union of Nevada would not have had one of the handful of volunteer leaders that sustained it from its founding in 1966 to 1985. It is entirely possible that the organization would have faded from existence in the 1970s without his service as the state president who held together its northern and southern chapters and took on

a myriad of large and small tasks. It survived, and today supports a paid staff of six, arguably emerging as the state's leading human rights advocacy group.

The University of Nevada's Department of Political Science would have managed with or without any one person, but Elmer, Don Driggs, Eleanore Bushnell, Harry Chase, and Jim Roberts were its founding group when it separated from Nevada's History Department between 1958 and 1963. Elmer helped establish the reputation of that faculty for teaching, public service, and mentoring—qualities that are frequently cited by its alumni four decades later.

The University of Nevada usually accepted, and occasionally encouraged, the decisions of its faculty members to be active in community, state, and national organizations. The Reno campus always had faculty who took full advantage of such opportunities, both as a way to fulfill their own sense of social responsibility and as a means to achieve particular political goals. Jeanne Wier, Wilbur Shepperson, Glenn Miller, Jim Richardson, and Elmer are among those whose lives span almost a century of highly diverse, sustained, and effective commitments to groups and causes in the Silver State and nationally. In Elmer's case this included involvements with organizations committed to the environment (Friends of Rancho San Rafael and Friends of Pyramid Lake), religion (the Unitarian Universalists), civil rights (the ACLU Nevada and the Northern Nevada Black Cultural Awareness Society), political reform (Common Cause), legal aid (Washoe Legal Services), direct help for the poor (Community Services Agency and Habitat for Humanity), and much more.

All but one of these organizations survives today, and the leaders of each can recall myriad contributions

from Elmer Rusco. For one (Habitat) he raised hundreds of thousands of dollars in support. For some others he gave ten or twenty years of work that ranged from vital organizational management to his wise counsel and amiable leadership.

Although much of this oral history involves the participation of Rusco in these organizations, it also provides exceptional insight into how his religious, personal, and political philosophy was shaped. The sources were mostly rooted in rural Kansas but also involved a cattleboat excursion that spanned several continents and a Midwesterner's encounters with the Jim Crow South. Few of us have had such dramatic maturing and clarifying experiences in young adulthood. The key experiences of his undergraduate years seem to have been with CORE, the Council for Racial Equality, in and around Lawrence, Kansas. It is clear that these life changing experiences were fully complemented and reinforced by his life with Mary in the course of their courtship and five decade marriage.

My now deceased wife Joan and I had our first meal in Reno, in 1965, with Elmer and Mary. Then and now he struck me as an exceptionally thoughtful, decent, and committed man. The Ruscos assisted me when I needed it most—helping to care for Joan when her Multiple Sclerosis became severe after 1985. In 2004 I learned that Elmer was suffering from a related condition, ALS. His mind, still sharp, now focuses on his family and his legacy of writings and research materials concerning civil rights in Nevada and the nation.

For Elmer, "retirement" in 1986 added to his life the time to become the state's leading authority on Nevada's civil rights legacy and its struggle with racism. He was able to complete monumental studies on federal

Indian policy and on Nevada's encounters with its Chinese residents, in addition to a myriad of published studies on poverty and the black experience in the Silver state. To return to the theme of *It's a Wonderful Life*, without Elmer Rusco this field of study would not have a sound foundation in his adopted state. Professor Rusco leaves us with his articles, his books, and a room full of files at the Nevada Historical Society for his successors to rummage through for their own research. The historical society legacy is still another connection with the activism of such academic Nevadans as Jeanne Wier and Wilbur Shepperson.

This published work is the summation of Elmer's life in civil liberties and civil rights and his pursuit of legal and historical truth. All of this, together with the memories of him as friend, colleague, member of the Unitarian Universalist congregation, and family man, are the legacies of a man orphaned in Kansas who contributed so much to the history and conscience of his adopted state of Nevada.

Richard Siegel
Reno, 2004

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My father, William Rusco, was born and raised in Clifton, Kansas, which is about halfway across the state, very close to the Nebraska border. He was the youngest child in a family of nine, and both his parents were dead before he was thirty. My father and my mother, Bertha Hess Weaver, had been married for about ten years when I was born on May 6, 1928. Our home was a farmhouse a few miles northeast of the small town of Haviland in western Kansas.

The Ruscos are of English background. There are people in the family who have traced us back to Ruscos that moved from Essex , England, to Connecticut in 1630. (They've given me results without showing me the data, so I hope they've got it right.) There's continuity from that time. The first census of the United States identified households by family name, and in 1790 there were Ruscos in Connecticut and in the Oyster Bay area in New York. But there aren't many Ruscos in the census

after that. I was told by a cousin that Ruscos almost always have female children, so there are just as many descendants as you would expect, but they don't have the name. I never checked with a demographer to see whether that is possible, because presumably sex is a random thing.

My grandfather Rusco arrived in Kansas from Iowa about 1870, I think, and homesteaded near Clifton. He had fought for the Union in the Civil War and was wounded. He applied for disability benefits after he'd been a farmer for several years, and finally got them. One of my cousins, Nina, who is the same age I am, still lives on the farm in the location of the original homestead. One of the buildings used by the Clifton Elementary School as an administrative building is the Rusco church, which was moved there from the farm, and the Rusco cemetery is still there. Rusco is a big name on the crosses. [laughter] The Ruscos were hardworking and successful farmers in that area.

My father died at the age of fifty-two, when I was just nine months old. Of course, I have no memory of him—I have a Meerschaum pipe that was his, and a violin that was his, but those are the only two things that directly connect me with him. In fact, I knew very little about him when I was a boy. Because of the circumstances of his death, my mother didn't talk about him much, and our family didn't have contact with other Ruscos for a long time after he died.

The problem was . . . well, for the record, my father died of a heart attack, but he was, in fact, already in the final stages of syphilis, called "general paresis." [General paresis is characterized primarily by impaired mental function caused by damage to the brain from untreated

syphilis.] Mother had no idea what was wrong with him until he was diagnosed and committed to Larned State Hospital for the insane in December of 1928.

My father had been a schoolteacher, and in 1928, before his final illness, he won the Republican nomination for superintendent of schools in Meade County. Meade County was heavily Republican, but he lost the general election to a Democrat. My guess is that he ran for the nomination before there were any obvious signs of the final stage of the disease, but his mental condition deteriorated thereafter, and it was evident to the voters by the time of the general election.

If untreated, syphilis takes fifteen to twenty years to run its course, but the disease is contagious only in its early stages. My father must have been infected long before he married my mother, because he didn't pass it on to her . . . or, through her, to her children. (She bore him two children—me and my brother Bill, four years older —and neither of us was infected.)

I'm sure that my mother's family had Puritan roots. My grandfather Weaver was a Methodist minister, and he would have gotten along well with Cotton Mather and those folks from the old days! [laughter] He had very strong morals and religious beliefs by which he lived, and so did everybody else in his family. Nobody smoked; nobody even contemplated taking any alcohol; nobody strayed from the path of righteousness—that would have been unimaginable.

Mother wouldn't have married anybody whom she suspected had been promiscuous, even once; and in the case of my father, it could have been only once, fate being what it is. The revelation that he had syphilis, and his subsequent death, leaving her widowed with a baby and a five-year old to raise alone, were too much. She



"My grandfather Weaver was a Methodist minister." Elmer's grandfather (front), mother, and Uncle Ben in 1908.

went into an emotional tailspin from which she never recovered. Then, too, the Great Depression began soon after, making things even harder for her. She had been a schoolteacher, but, as far as I know, she never taught again and never had a job of any kind after my father died. It was many years before she admitted the cause of his death to me, and then only after somebody in her family told me what killed him—she confirmed it, but she didn't say anything else.

I subscribe to Ashley Montagu's view that people need love early in life to be fundamentally healthy throughout their lives, because humans are very sociable creatures. We can't function properly emotionally without early love. I got that love from my mother, as well as physical care, but she was not able to cope in many other ways, and there were important consequences. One was that her extended family, her brothers and sisters, had to take care of us. (Mother had ten siblings. I like to say that her mother bore eleven children before she unaccountably died young . . . but that isn't really funny. She died before I was born. The only one of my grandparents to live long enough for me to know him was my mother's father.)

Following my father's death, my mother and Bill and I went to live for a while on the Eagle Canyon Ranch, owned by Mother's brother, Ben, and his wife, Etta. It was near Mullinville, Kansas. From then on, we moved around a great deal, which at the time didn't strike me as unusual. Several years ago, in the middle of the night, I tried to recall all the places I lived from birth through high school. I came up with eleven places, but we actually moved more than eleven times. We lived at Eagle Canyon Ranch several different times, and this was true also of my grandfather's house at 316 South Oak in Wichita. When I was a kid, it never occurred to me to wonder about why we moved so frequently, but my guess is that it was partly because my mother would sometimes get behind in the rent, and the landlord would kick us out. Also, she was always seeking to improve things for us.

Uncle Ben and Aunt Etta took care of us—they didn't know that Anglo-Protestants only believe in the nuclear family. They hadn't read any sociology, I guess! [laughter] As Bill and I got closer to adolescence, they concluded that Mother wouldn't be able to take care of us in this period, and I moved out of my mother's house just before the eighth grade. My brother had earlier followed a similar trajectory. It was the judgment of the family that we needed to do that—exactly why, I don't know. So I moved out to the ranch and went to eighth grade in Mullinville. They didn't have a middle school in Mullinville, but I spent the first two years of high school there. Then, for the last two years, I decided to attend a better high school, so I moved to Wichita and went to Wichita North.

The ranch was a good place. Ben and Etta had five kids, and they weren't rich, but the ranch had every-

thing. That's the way farms were then. The cash crop was wheat. They also raised what we called "feed," which is maybe what is now called milo, although I don't remember that name. When the crop was mature, you cut it, baled it, and stacked it all together in the fields. Later, the feed would be taken back and made into silage to feed the cattle all winter.

We had chickens for eggs and meat, and hogs, and milk cows. You had to milk the cows twice a day, and their calves became part of the herd to be raised for beef. We had a big vegetable garden up by the water tank near the barn. The windmill was kept going, and it overflowed the tank and automatically watered the garden. So the ranch was largely self-sufficient in terms of food.

Then, there was the cash crop. It was dry farming, which was inherently risky. Some years there was a drouth, and you didn't have much of a crop, but the ranch was more stable financially than many other families. They had a big house. I once counted twenty rooms.



Eagle Canyon Ranch. *"There were two stories above ground, and it was built into the side of a clay canyon, with two stories below."*

There were two stories above ground, and it was built into the side of a clay canyon, with two more stories below. A big house, so they had plenty of room for their five kids and for Bill and me. It has now fallen into the canyon, but Etta told me once that they had to use dynamite to go below the ground. It was completed in 1900. They also had a live-in hired hand, Bill Allen. Overall, living there was a wonderful experience. I learned to work and be responsible.

Aunt Etta's maiden name was Marriage, as in the most common kind of union people practice nowadays. [laughter] The Marriage family has been traced back to 18th century England, and they were Quakers. Etta's father, who died in 1923, had made a lot of money in farming, I think, in Iowa. He came out to western Kansas in the 1890s, bought a good bit of property, and started Eagle Canyon Ranch. When I lived there, the ranch was twelve hundred acres; that was a good-sized ranch, especially out there, but it had been quite a bit bigger when it was completed in 1900. Ben told me that one way they got through the Depression was by selling off land, although that wasn't always easy to do. [laughter] They didn't have much money, but they had land.

I don't remember ever seeing anything quite like the terrain the ranch was situated in. It's on the plains, and there is a little bit of rolling land, but basically it's flat. The area is along the Arkansas River, although the river is some miles away, and you drive along on level ground, and then the ground falls away into "canyons" that are formed when limestone formations collapse. Apparently, beneath the earth there are nodules of limestone, some quite large. As water circulates down into them, it washes away the limestone, and you get sink-

holes. Then those sinkholes link up into a system of canyons. That's what most of the ranch was.

The croplands were mostly up on the northern side on purely flat land, and you could see this process of forming canyons taking place. While I was there, part of the field that was used for feed developed a sinkhole. Then the sinkhole collapsed further and connected up with the canyon system, so that you had to build a fence around it. That's what you had—clay canyons that varied anywhere from six to probably twenty-five feet deep.

There were cottonwood trees in the bottoms of the canyons, and a black walnut tree that somebody must have planted was close to the ranch house. There were also sand plums. We used to gather sand plums and make wonderful jelly out of them But there wasn't much in the way of trees—most of the ranch land was pasture. The grass was called "buffalo grass" locally. It was nutritious, and cattle thrived on it. It was thick, but it never grew very high, even when it wasn't being grazed. There were also a number of tiny flowers that would come up in the pastures and bloom in the spring.

Etta's father died fairly soon after she and Ben were married. After his death, Etta and her mother, who survived into her nineties, jointly owned the ranch. Ben was the rancher, but they owned it. Ben was a fine man and not dumb at all, but Etta was sharper about business things than he was, and I think she figured, "It'd be better if I hung onto this." She once told me that Ben was really a schoolteacher, not a rancher.

By selective breeding, Etta's father had started a red strain of cattle called "Marriage Mulleys." They didn't have horns, and they were bred to be good for both milk and meat. They probably weren't the best for either, but

A bald eagle —bold bird— first suggested the name
Of the great Canyon Ranch, now of National fame.
Whilst riding through Kansas and viewing to buy,
O'er a steep canyon cliff a huge nest I did spy.

Down my lasso I slid and arrived at the nest,
And saluted the bird with the white shining crest.
Now here we are breeding the finest and best
Cattle on earth—**"Marriage Mulleys."**

They are red—all red, without a white spot—
A herd of real beauties, the entire lot;
They're not pampered, either, as most fine cattle are.
But instead they are given only common ranch care,

They are good in the dairy and good on the block,
And as easy to keep as birds in a flock;
This new dual breed dispels doubts and fears,
For they've stood a private test for a great many years.

The breed is still new, I tell in few words,
But I'm sure you'll agree it's the best of all herds;
It is first-class meat, from brisket to steak,
And no better meat can the place of it take.

This breed is the offspring of four noted kine—
Queen, Faith, Hope and Charity—all very fine;
They were raised in America by a man of English birth
You see they're all right by the price they are worth.

When you sit down to milk, at morning or night,
You milk with assurance—the milk is all right.
And while you are milking you can feel quite at ease,
For they're very gentle—a trait that will please.

So I tell you again, in words that are true,
They're the best breed of cattle for me and for you!
And in time to come, when you decide to try
The finest dual cattle, "Marriage Mulleys" you'll buy.

JNO. MARRIAGE,
MULLEYVALE,
Rt. 1, Kns. Cty, Kns.

Marriage Mulley Steer, WEDLOCK, Traveling



He is the Eagle Canyon Ranch Nine because he measures 9 ft. long, 9 ft. flank girth, 9 ft. heart girth, 9 in. from hoof to knee, and 9 in. around his ankle. He did well playing with the **Marriage Mulley** cows on the buffalo lawn where he scored 2030 lbs., but balanced ration grain caused Wedlock to gain 300 lbs. in the first 50 days of feeding. Wedlock's sister produced a calf at two years of age and later gave six gallons of milk a day from which over two lbs. of butter was extracted.

they were good for both—hanging on a wall on the bottom story of the ranch house was a piece of canvas maybe twelve or fifteen feet long, full of ribbons that had been won for Marriage Mulley cattle at various fairs or other things. But Ben didn't keep up the Marriage Mulley strain. He would go to an auction and buy a Holstein or a Hereford, if it looked good. He wasn't interested in maintaining the breed, and I don't think he had that particular aptitude, either.

Most of western Kansas is flat, or almost so. There are rolling hills, but very low. Mullinville is on US 54, one of the major, two-lane, paved highways between Wichita and Colorado. Just a little bit east of Mullinville, another highway curves off to the left and goes down to Liberal and the Oklahoma-Texas panhandle. Mullinville itself was quite small when I lived there. In the 1960 census, the number of people listed as living in Mullinville was, I think, 410, and they had to be counting a few livestock, because I thought at one point I knew everybody in town. [laughter] It was quite small.

The east-west highway was the main street. When you came in on that highway from the west, the cemetery was the first thing you saw on the left, and after no more than five blocks, you were out of town on the east end. Right in the middle of town there was a stop sign, I think . . . maybe not. Anyway, the north-south road, which was unpaved, crossed there at right angles. Everything was laid out on a rectangle, because it was the easiest thing to do.

At that time the road that curved off toward Liberal ran along the south end of town—there was nothing south of it. Immediately north of it was the co-op filling station, including mechanical service. Then you had the

Santa Fe railroad tracks. On the other side of the tracks to the left, you had the co-op grain elevator, and to the right, a private grain elevator and the train station, which was right on the north-south road. Beyond it to the east, you had the residence of the Espinosas, a Mexican family. As you went further up the north-south road, there were several old, frame buildings sort of tied together. One of them was the post office. (You could walk in to get your mail, and if you got a postcard, the postmaster would talk about the message that was written on it! [laughter] Which was kind of neat in a way.) One was a small library, and one was a co-op grocery store. Mullinville was a very strong co-op town.

On the right-hand side of that street would have been Bill Suter, who was known as "Suter Bill" for some reason. He had a blacksmith shop. There were still enough horses around that needed shoeing, and there were repairs that he could make to farm equipment, so he was able to maintain this small blacksmith shop for a number of years. And at one point, Uncle Ben tried to interest me in taking it over when Suter Bill was getting ready



"Mullinville was a very strong co-op town."

to retire, but I knew from nothing about any of that and wasn't interested. Suter Bill's was roughly opposite the post office, then a little bit further north was the high school. It was a nice brick building. I think it had only two stories, and there were athletic fields behind it and nice grass lawns in front.

For a long time there was a filling station on the corner at the intersection with the east-west highway, and across the street to the north was the bank. On the south side of the highway was an abandoned wood-frame commercial building. When we were in grade school, we would walk from the school, which was only a couple of blocks north and one block east of the intersection, to that building to have our lunches.

The sidewalk is no longer there, but I can tell you exactly where we were on the sidewalk on the Monday after Pearl Harbor, which is when I discovered that Pearl Harbor had been bombed by the Japanese. It had happened, of course, on a Sunday. It was all over the radio, but we didn't listen to the radio out at the ranch. I was going in on the bus—probably indicates how socially inept I was—and nobody said anything. It wasn't until we were almost to the lunch house that day that I heard somebody say something about it. I can still remember the shock, because I knew my brother, who was four years older, would be in the war, as he was. Possibly nobody else in the country found out so late that Pearl Harbor had occurred.

Most of the residences in Mullinville were north of the main highway. There were not a lot. There were two schools, an elementary and the high school. (You went through eighth grade in the first.) The water tank was east of the intersection. Both churches were in the northwest quadrant. The United Brethren Church was a

brick structure, but the other church, about two blocks east of the United Brethren, was a somewhat simpler and poorer thing. It was a Protestant denomination—other than that, I don't remember what it was. My impression was that the lower-income people in the town and the surrounding farms and ranches tended to go to that one. The one we went to was middle class, presumably middle income.

Everybody in the community was white, except for the Espinosas . . . and I don't know whether they were considered non-white or not. (Even the census bureau can't make up its mind whether Hispanics are a race or not, but they are often perceived in racial terms.) Anyway, the only persons who weren't clearly white people were the Espinosas. There weren't too many people you could call people of prominence in the community. The banker had a position of prominence, and perhaps the ministers. Beyond that, a few relatively well-to-do farmers lived in town and drove out to their farms, especially beginning in the 1950s. Ben and Etta did that after awhile. Their farm was seven or eight miles south and a couple of miles east, and most of the people I knew when I lived there were from farms and ranches.

At the time that I lived there, the roads, except for the highways, were all dirt roads. If you had a really heavy rain, what you got was mud—deep mud. There were two ways to deal with that. One was to just skim along on the surface in a light car, sliding from side to side. (There wasn't enough traffic to be dangerous.) The other was that you would just plow mud. In conditions like that, it took a couple of hours to get to the ranch, going home from school in the school bus, because the bus was so heavy. It just dug down, and it left furrows

eight or ten inches deep. It was very slow going, so the people who could live in town sometimes did.

Mullinville was fully electrified, but the surrounding farms went through several stages. When I was first at the Eagle Canyon Ranch, we had coal oil or kerosene lamps, and my job was to clean their chimneys, which would smoke up. We had those for some time, and then we got a big Coleman gasoline lamp, which hung from the center of the ceiling of the living room, a big room that you went into when you entered the house from the front. Everything else was coal oil lanterns around the house.

The next stage was a Delta gasoline engine powering a generator. The engine was a big, black thing that sat on the floor. It had a big flywheel on it, and my job was to go down there and start it with the flywheel. I could barely move it, but I always did it. There was a bank of big batteries, maybe ten or so, two rows of them, off to the side to store the electricity. That system was brought in, and then the entire house had electricity. Sometime after that—all this occurred in the 1930s and 1940s—a Wincharger was put up behind the house on a tall pole, and it replaced the Delta engine and its generator. Electricity was generated for the whole house by the Wincharger. And then REA, the Rural Electrification Agency, came in and brought the power poles out to the ranches, which were widely scattered.

I don't remember ever having any problems with being able to read or anything like that. We always had enough light in the living room to sit around reading or talking at night, and the dining room had enough light. But I don't know that during my time, they ever had electricity at the barns up the hill. You had to take a coal-oil lamp with a handle if you went up there at night—some-

times in the winter, early morning, you're milking the cows in the dark, so you had to have some light.

The house had indoor plumbing. It went to a big septic tank over on the south side of the house. And we had ice boxes (and later a refrigerator) and a washing machine. For years, the washing machine was a big oak tub, with a big lever that had to be pushed and pulled, back and forth, to do the wash. Bill, the hired man, was the one that washed the clothes, and we had clotheslines down below the house. The house extended to the east into the bank along one side of this big, open area where the clotheslines were, and then off a little bit there was a big room right at the bottom of the stairs on the first flight down, and that was where the laundry was. Bill would do the laundry with that hand-operated washer.



Cousin Eldon supported on brother Bill's shoulders.

Nobody was big into hunting, but Eldon and I would occasionally hunt rabbits. We didn't fish. It was something like Nevada, in that it was a relatively dry area.

There were intermittent streams in the canyons only when you had big rains. You didn't have regularly running streams, although in the bottom of some of the canyons, you would have cottonwoods and other trees, and that meant there was water a fairly short distance down. There was sufficient groundwater, but there weren't any streams around where you could fish.

The main crop was winter wheat, so you plant your wheat in September, roughly. You waited sometimes if you hadn't had a rain. It germinates, and then it comes up, and in the fall and winter it grows low . . . not very high, but it grows, and you can use it to provide feed for your cattle, so you can postpone having to give them the dry feed, which you raise in the summer. That was a very important part of the cycle. In the winter you take the cattle off, and then when spring comes, it grows up, and you get a wheat crop.

Well, one year there were so many rabbits that they were eating down the green wheat, causing problems for the cattle. So what we would do We had .410 shotguns, and we would wait until dark, and we would drive without headlights out into the field nearest to the barn, where the biggest problem was. There would be a kid on each fender of the car. Then they would turn on the car lights, and the rabbits would sit up and stare into the lights, and we would blast them with the .410's. Mostly these were jackrabbits, and you don't eat jackrabbits. You just killed them because they were in the wheat that we needed for the cows. This wasn't sporting at all, you know.

We weren't into hunting, and I never learned. The only other hunting thing I did, if you can call it that, was when I had to go up once and shoot a possum in a trap. One of my jobs was to collect the eggs in the henhouse. I

discovered that some of them were being eaten by something, and then I saw a possum in the henhouse. So I went down to the house, and they sent me back with a trap, one of those cruel leg traps. I set it in one of the boxes, and the next time I came up, there was a possum trapped there. So I got the .410 and killed the possum, which I didn't really want to do. But that's what you do.

I used to have to kill chickens. (We ate a lot of chicken.) You pulled their heads off—you placed the neck down and put a stick right on top and stepped down hard and pulled at the same time, and the head came off. The chickens run around for a while after you do that. I didn't really enjoy that, but, again, you do what you have to do. Then you take them down to the house, and you dip them in boiling water and pull the feathers out. I used to know how to cut up chickens very well. [laughter]

I gathered the eggs. We had a henhouse for them with little cubicles, and we kept straw. We fed them in there; they slept in there at night, because coyotes would get them at night if you didn't lock them up. But the hens really preferred going up into the hayloft, which was above the barn where we milked the cows and had some horses. They would make themselves little nests back in the corner and lay big bunches of eggs, hoping to raise more chicks. Every so often I'd be sent up there to find them. Sometimes you'd find a cache of maybe fifteen eggs, and the hen would run off squawking when you came by, and you'd pick them up. [laughter] Those are memories that I have.

Even though the Weavers had more money than some of the other farmers during the Depression, they didn't have much cash, so we raised almost all our food one way or another. They assigned various jobs depending on what needed to be done. At times I was washing

dishes. Always I was milking cows, and always I did something up at the barns—feeding, slopping hogs, we called it. Some of the milk was put through a separator, initially a hand-operated separator, that removed the cream, which we sold once weekly to somebody in Mullinville who took it to a creamery in Dodge City. And then, of course, we used some of it. They made cheese, butter, and cottage cheese out of it, and buttermilk. It was a kind of subsistence agriculture. There was also the cash crop of wheat if the crop made it. Didn't every year. So even though the Weavers had a big ranch and more money than many of the other farmers, they weren't well-to-do. We had to do all this just to raise food for the family. There were five kids around, plus the hired man. So you had to feed quite a few people.

Mother's family, the Weavers and those they had married, were middle class, and that meant several things that were important. For one, everybody spoke standard English. (Oddly, I later learned that not everybody in my father's family did. They were uneducated farmers.) For another, everybody believed education was very important, and when I was a schoolboy, I wanted to go on to college. My family was full of teachers, and one uncle was the principal of Topeka High School at a time when there was only one high school in the whole city. He was Uncle Ernest, otherwise known as Buck.

Uncle Ben and Aunt Etta were wonderful people, both born in 1891. They met when Ben, who was a schoolteacher, came to teach in a small school near the entrance to Eagle Canyon Ranch, which was owned by Etta's family, the Marriages. At the time, Ben was living at the Thatch farm just north of the ranch.

Ben was a bright, well-informed guy. Even though he was a school teacher, and not really a rancher, Eagle Canyon Ranch was a success. Ben was also a leader in his community, which affected me—he became an important role model in my life. I never went into elected office, or even tried; but I've always been interested in applying anything I learned in a way that might be helpful to other folks. I got a lot of that from Ben and Etta . . . but especially Ben.

About the time of World War I, a school district was organized in Mullinville, and a high school was built. Ben was the first chair of that school board and stayed in the position for more than forty-five years. Sometime in the 1920s, he was also elected to the state legislature, asked to run by farmers who were suffering an economic injustice. The farmers in the community had begun to form co-ops, democratically operated enterprises. They started a co-op grain elevator first—it was right on the Santa Fe track which ran through town. The farmers believed the Santa Fe was in cahoots with the private el-



The Mullinville co-op grain elevator office.

evator in Mullinville, because when the railroad would bring in grain cars, they'd park some right by the private elevator, but they would park cars for the co-op elevator way down the track. The farmers would have to come in with crowbars and move the cars down the track by hand in order to load them and ship their wheat out.

Ben served in the state legislature for twenty-two years as the representative from Kiowa County. He also ran unsuccessfully for the Senate in 1964. He was the most important person in the community all those years, and everybody knew him. He was a very outgoing kind of guy, who understood that people like to talk about themselves, so everywhere he went he asked people their names and questioned them about what they did. There was a party line telephone system in Mullinville—I think there were seven people on the line—and he knew everybody else's ring. If some school kid was home at Thatch's, which was the nearest ranch, and he heard them called, he would pick up the phone, listen, and join in the conversation. [laughter] When you got a call from him, he never said, "This is Ben." He just started talking, because everybody recognized his voice.



Uncle Ben Weaver.

Ben was never dishonest, but he learned some of the tricks of politics. When

he retired from farming, we went back to see him once, and he said that he and Etta were planning to drive up the Alcan Highway the next year. They had never done that. And so we went back the next year, expecting to hear tales of this trip, but no, they hadn't gone. We asked, "Why, not?" He said, "Well, we had enough income, but a lot of other people around here didn't, and I might want to run for office again!"

I'm sure he was honest in everything—after twenty-two years he'd have been fairly wealthy if he'd been accepting money. He was offered the wardenship of the state prison at one time and decided not to accept it. He was a wonderful role model.

I don't know how many years I actually lived at the ranch. The earliest years, I don't have any specific memories of, and nobody ever filled me in. I must have lived there my first few years, and then we moved back to Wichita. (The family is big on nicknames, and I was given the nickname Pete, because I used to sing a song about Peter Rabbit when we lived at the ranch when I was two or three years old. My cousin Ernest Rieger, the surgeon, still calls me Pete, but nobody else does.) I did go to kindergarten in Mullinville. The only thing I remember about it is taking naps and eating graham crackers and drinking milk. [laughter] Then I lived at the ranch again during the eighth grade. In between, I spent several summers out there.

After eighth grade, I lived with and worked for a farm family north of Mullinville who were raising turkeys. Melvin McClaren was the man's name. I was a turkey herder; that was my job. [laughter] I also milked cows and goats, and I actually plowed with mules while I was there. Ben and Etta found that job and the next one

for me. I don't know whether they were doing it for me, or whether they were getting too many people at the ranch to take care of, or whatever, but they found me that job, and I spent a year doing it. Then I spent the next year working for a farm family just a few miles west of Mullinville. They had a small dairy. I was milking cows, and my forearms used to be like iron for quite awhile, because I milked lots of cows—morning and night.

During the three years I spent in Mullinville, beginning in the eighth grade, I only lived at the ranch one year. But I went back there weekends as often as I could, and that sort of thing. Then I spent time when I was in college going back and working in the summer, occasionally. In my mind, I always had the idea that the Eagle Canyon Ranch was really my home—it was a wonderful place.

The ranch was of considerable significance in my life, because Ben and Etta were wonderful people. Aunt Etta kind of mothered me in a way. Etta was a really strong person, so I got used to women being strong. [laughter] She had done everything she had to do as a wife and mother, but she had a life of her own and took charge of situations. We had a propane water heater in the bathroom at the ranch, and it caught fire once; there was flame roaring out of it. Etta went in there, calmly turned everything off, and put out the fire. That was the kind of person she was. So Etta shaped my view, I



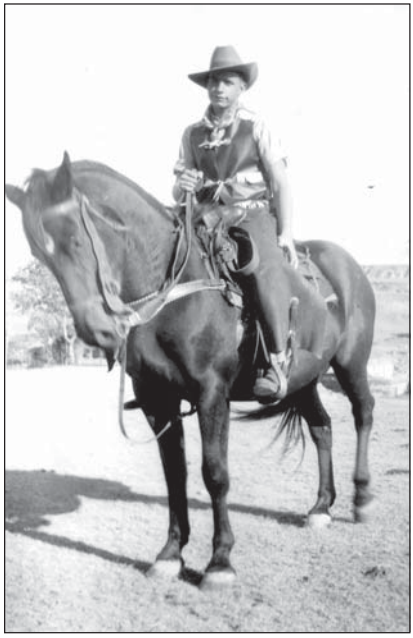
"Etta was a really strong person."

think, of what women could do. I married a strong-minded woman, and it may have had something to do with my regard for Etta, because this was a trait that I thought was desirable.

Etta was active in some kind of Kansas writing association. I don't think she ever published very much, but she was oriented toward writing, and she spent most of her time doing that. For example, she published a story about the church that they went to—the Evangelical United Brethren Church in Mullinville—and how they financed a new building. Among other things, Ben was the Sunday-school teacher there for men for probably forty years. There were two churches in Mullinville. This was the one that was more for middle class persons than the other.

Ben and Etta had three girls and two boys. The girls were older, and by the time I moved there to attend the eighth grade, they had gotten married and largely moved out, so I didn't know them well. Vivian first married an air force or army pilot, who was killed in training, and then she married a navy pilot, and that lasted. Vivian was the prettiest of the three. Doris married an oil engineer and lived her life in Houston. She is one of the funniest people I've ever known—she has marvelous stories. The third girl was Marge, who married a man who became an executive with a manufacturer of farm equipment, if I remember correctly. Then there were Kenneth and Eldon, who was only a year older than me.

I was treated, basically, like one of the family, but I remember one time that I wasn't, and that hurt for a while. The family used to have big reunions, and they were going up to Pratt or somewhere to have one. I was expecting to go along, but Etta told me, "No, you have to



"Eldon was only a year older than me."

stay here and help Bill with the chores." (Bill was the hired man.) That hurt . . . so I wasn't entirely family. But they were just wonderful people, and I didn't have any problem feeling that that really was my family.

My extended family was very middle class. I learned from them that you are responsible for other people, and that you have to help others, especially family. But Ben and Etta were helpful to all kinds of people—they were just that way, and I think I may have acquired some of my orientation toward trying to help other people from them. Another of their important middle class values was education, and I was oriented toward education from the beginning.

I read a lot as a kid. I don't understand how anybody who can read—and finds out that you can enormously expand your horizons simply by reading about things that you can't experience yourself—would not read. I learned that at an early age; I've always read. Also, I may have read so much partly because we moved so much, and I was usually in places where I didn't know everybody. That made me a shy person, right from the beginning. Kids sometimes exclude new kids who come in, if their neighborhood has been stable, and I may have

read a lot in part for this reason. I wasn't athletic, and I didn't have as much of a social life as some people, which I think made me a shy person. Books may have provided a refuge. Anyway, I did a lot of reading, and I was oriented toward going to college from the beginning.

2

I moved to Wichita following the tenth grade and attended Wichita North High School for the eleventh and twelfth grades. I lived with my Aunt Beth, one of my mother's sisters, and Uncle Herbert Rieger. He had a drugstore with a soda fountain in West Wichita. He was a pharmacist, but he also rented and sold hospital equipment: wheel chairs, hospital beds, canes, everything. Ernie, Aunt Beth's oldest son, who is only a month different from me in age, graduated at the same time as me. Beth was very helpful in trying to get us scholarships for college.

Wichita North was a better high school than the small one at Mullinville, and the idea was to better prepare me for going on to college. As an example, when I took world history at Mullinville High School, the teacher was the coach. He was a nice guy, but he didn't know much about world history. Mullinville High School was quite small—I can't remember exact figures, but a gradu-

ating class would be fifteen or twenty people, something like that.

Looking ahead to college, I thought I wanted to be a physician, so the family found me a job my first year at Wichita North as an orderly in the surgery at Wichita Hospital. It was a Catholic hospital; the nuns ran it. I spent a year doing that, and then concluded that I was too soft-hearted to be a physician. I had a couple of experiences that did me in. [laughter] I was too dumb to ask anyone how you get over this, but I've since learned that physicians and nurses have ways of dealing with the fact that they see horrible things often. Anyway, I concluded that I no longer wanted to be a physician, although I didn't know what I wanted to be.

One time in high school in Wichita, my brother found out about some aptitude testing outfit, a private company in Chicago. He went there and took a whole series of aptitude tests, and then I did, too. I learned what Howard Gardner insists is very important, that there isn't one general intelligence; there are various intelligences. If you're a genius at hitting baseballs, like Babe Ruth, you're not necessarily good at linguistics or logic or all kinds of other things. At this place where I went to do aptitude testing, one of the many tests was how quickly you could pick up a bunch of pins with your fingers or tweezers and put them in holes. I did very well with the tweezers, but poorly with my fingers. You would think they would be the same thing, but they're not—even something as close as that. I'm still clumsy with my fingers, but I can handle tools well.

The aptitude testers said I might be able to do well in several things, but they recommended that, because I have good spatial visualization, maybe I could be an architect. I never had any interest in that. When I

later went to college, I fell in with a group of people who were oriented toward political science, and there wasn't any turning back, so I never even considered architecture.

My extended family didn't have any specific expectations for me, but they were extremely supportive of going to college and getting professional degrees. In my generation, there are two physicians; there's at least one lawyer; and someone else has a Ph.D. . . . our generation has a lot of advanced degrees. In the previous generation, not everybody even completed college, but they all wanted to.

Actually, when I was a kid, we didn't have books around the house very much. My mother didn't do much reading, but she assumed it was a good thing, and there always were libraries. Teachers are happy to have somebody who loves to read and can write more or less clearly. [laughter] So I was always encouraged at a certain point by my teachers. Particularly by Gladys Mason, the journalism teacher, to whom I owe a great deal.

I was pretty focused and disciplined, I guess, from an early age. I had a happy childhood, but I didn't have any outside interests or hobbies. I remember going through a brief period of making model airplanes, but I was never really good at it. [laughter] I did a little stamp collecting, but it wasn't anything. In high school in Wichita for awhile, I had a friend I went bowling with. Again, I wasn't very good at it, and it didn't develop into much of a friendship, but I got along with people.

I don't need sociability the way my wife does, and this is partly gender based, I think, but it's also partly an individual difference. I don't have the need for sociability as much as some people do, and I didn't have much of a social life in high school. I had a girlfriend, Mary

Faith Pellett, who became a sociologist, and she taught me to dance . . . or she tried to teach me to dance. [laughter] I never really learned. We didn't have an affair in the modern sense at all, but we'd sit on her front porch and talk for hours and hours and do a little smooching. I didn't go to parties or anything else, but it didn't bother me. I was busy. I guess that sort of thing has never been a real interest of mine.

I could write more or less clearly from an early age, and when I was in high school in Wichita, I won second prize in an American Legion contest for something I wrote. I also won one of several prizes in a co-op contest once, and got to take a trip to Kansas City because of this. (The co-ops were very big in Mullinville. Their wholesaler was a big co-op company located in Kansas City, Missouri, called CCA, Consumer Cooperative Association. It was later called Midland Industries, and it just went bankrupt. I was very sad to learn that.) Anyway, I could write fairly well, so I took the journalism class, which meant I worked on the school paper, and the teacher, Gladys Mason, liked me.

I knew that I should go to college, and I wanted to, but I was going to need some financial assistance. Mother didn't have any money . . . and all the family had their own kids to send to college, and they didn't have a lot of money, either. So Mrs. Mason and Aunt Beth got together and made sure that I took all the exams that were available for scholarships. I even took the Pepsi-Cola exam. I didn't qualify for anything there, but there was a University of Kansas (KU) scholarship program called the Summerfield Scholarships, and I was awarded one of these.

Solon Summerfield was a graduate of KU who had made a lot of money. He established a scholarship pro-



Elmer, Mary, and Kathy, with Aunts Winnie and Florence (standing, l. to r. center) and Beth (sitting, r.), 1968.

gram that was the best I've ever seen. The system began with an annual test in all the high schools in Kansas. Each high school could then nominate people for the second round. Then you went to Lawrence, where the university is, and met with the committee. There were interviews, and you got to learn a little about college life. I got to see a play for the first time on that visit. Then they made the ultimate selection. There was enough money for a variable number of people—something like twelve or fifteen a year, and it was only males. Discriminatory, beyond question! (KU got one like it for women later, but, unfortunately, it was flat-out discriminatory at the time I applied. I didn't think anything about this, but it was wrong.) Anyway, they made the selection of people on several grounds—tests and what the committee thought about whether the person would be able to maintain high grades.

Once you became a Summerfield Scholar, if you maintained at least an average of half A's and half B's, you had the fellowship for the whole four years. If you fell behind one semester, you had a semester to catch

up, but if you didn't maintain that high grade average, you were out. Not very many people flunked out of the program, because they did select according to whether you could do well in college.

The amount of money you received depended on how much money you needed. After you were chosen, everybody became a Summerfield Scholar, whether they got any money or not. Then you could have everything up to a full ride, which is what I needed. The son of a banker from Salina was in my class, and I know he didn't have a full ride. It is possible that he didn't get any money at all from the scholarship, but it was an honor to be named a Summerfield Scholar, money or not. They had various programs during the year. They had an annual picnic at the home of one of the members of the board that supervised the program, and every month there was a dinner at which the seniors would give papers. You were part of a group that was oriented toward intellectual achievement, so there were benefits even if you didn't get any money.

You didn't live in luxury. I lived in the student co-ops to keep costs down, and I worked most summers when I went to college, because at the beginning of the semester you had to pay fees and buy textbooks. They gave you a monthly stipend during the two semesters, and if you didn't have enough money to begin the fall semester, you could borrow from something called the Flower Fund, which didn't charge interest, then pay it back over the next few months. They weren't spoiling anybody, but they made it possible for people like me, who had no money to start with, to go to KU and to work full time at my studies. I didn't have to work during semesters as an undergrad, but the last year and a half, when I was a graduate student, I was a proctor in the

Western Civilization Program, and I got a little money there.

My cousin Ernie and I graduated from high school at the same time. Aunt Beth had graduated from Friends University, a Quaker school in Wichita, and in their alumni magazine she read that there was a program seeking young men to take care of livestock that was being sent over to Europe as part of the postwar rehabilitation program. This was the summer of 1946, a year after the end of the war, and before the Marshall Plan. She asked us if we would be interested in it. We were. We thought that we could make a little money before college, and it sounded really interesting, so we hitchhiked to Newport News, Virginia, where the program was based, and that summer we took two voyages to Europe.



Cattle boat crew of the *Carroll Victory*. Elmer is front row far left, and his cousin Ernest Rieger is second from the left in the back row. They called themselves "The Seagoing Cowboys."

Our job was to feed and water the cattle on the way over. That was it. In port, everything was unloaded, and the ship was cleaned up by the crew . . . except once when I was involved in a mutiny—my first mutiny—because the captain of the ship wanted the seagoing cowboys to do the cleanup, and some of us rebelled on principle. I didn't care about that. Anyway, we had time in port in these places, and the summer of 1946, Ernie and I went into Danzig together. We were there several days, because it took time to unload all the livestock and clean up the stalls, and we were free during that time, so we did quite a bit of wandering around.

I was absolutely appalled at the extent of the damage to that city, but the port (Nowyport, it was called) was barely damaged. Nowyport is Polish for Newport. [laughter] They had all the mechanical equipment for loading and unloading ships, and rail lines ran out to Nowy. Then you got down into Danzig, and there was just total devastation for as far as you could see sometimes. Complete devastation, everything leveled—block after block. They had streetcars operating, but it was just totally devastated.

The first time Ernie and I ever had anything alcoholic to drink was when we went to a bar in Nowyport, and people were drinking Eastern European style. You drink a little vodka and then follow it with Tokay wine. We were drunker than skunks very quickly and just barely got back to the ship. In fact, I collapsed while walking the last stretch to the ship, and people had to come out and rescue me.

The next day, one of the guys we had been drinking with hadn't shown up on the ship. We were very worried about his welfare. I was hung over, sick as a dog, but I could walk, so we went ashore to look for him. We walked

toward Danzig, through the site of a World War II tank battle between Russian and German tanks, and the devastation was incredible. Not only wasn't there a building standing, there wasn't a tree standing—just shattered trunks. Everything had been leveled by the tank battle; that's what we were told.

We wandered around, inquiring if anyone had found an American and sent him to a hospital or something, but it turned out that he was OK. There was another ship like ours in port, and it was moored closer to the bar, so the guy had just gone aboard and slept there overnight, because there was a bunk available.

One of the things that experience did was make it certain that I could never be an alcoholic. Since then, I've drunk too much, I think, only four times in my life, and they were accidental. I get sick to my stomach, and I don't want to do that.

Ernie and I spent nine months working on this kind of ship. We did two one-month trips in the summer, and then, just before we were to have started college, we got a chance to go on a ship to Greece and then down to South Africa and back twice, which was great. So we did that. It was supposed to last a semester, but there was a maritime strike, so we were gone until Easter. We lost two semesters, but it was worth it! Most of the travel I've done in my life was done at that time.

That whole experience was great in several respects. I learned how diverse the rest of the world was, and I concluded that it was really interesting. People spoke different languages. They dressed differently. They had different customs. They had different food. All that was fascinating to me. Now, I suppose I must have had some predilection that way anyhow, but this was really interesting, and I learned about diversity. I had known a

little about the ancient Greeks, but not much else—I read a book by Gilbert Murray in high school, which was all about the Greek period of great creativity that gave us Pericles and Socrates and Aristotle and Plato and the great dramatists, but that was all I knew.

I hadn't been aware of any minorities where I grew up, except in Mullinville there was a Mexican family, the Espinosas. The man was involved in track work for the Santa Fe Railroad. They lived in a railroad house right next to the train station, and in the eighth grade, my best friend was Tony Espinosa. We would get together and plan how we were going to get to the South Pacific sometime and do exciting things.

The Espinosa kids were very good students. Tony was really a bright person, and they all spoke English very well and had no problem. There were four or five kids, I think. Eulalio one year qualified as the valedictorian of the high school, and I know from Uncle Ben, who was the chair of the board, that they had a discussion about whether he would be allowed to give a valedictory address. He clearly qualified, but because he was a Mexican, they had a long discussion at a board meeting about whether to allow him. And then they did. To their credit they did. They went ahead, and nobody except those on the board or people who had some contact with them knew they'd even debated this—but they did.

There weren't any black people in Mullinville, and I'm sorry to say I was unaware of any black people at North High. There *had* to be, because, there were only two high schools in Wichita at that time, and the black community was on the near north side, and so there's no doubt in my mind that there were blacks at North High School. The school system was not segregated at that

level. It wasn't even segregated at the high school in Topeka when we got to *Brown v. Board of Education*. [laughter] By that time it was just the lower grades that were segregated, so there *had* to be black people at my school. Had to be black students there, and I was unaware, totally unaware. I knew *nothing* about race.

During the fall of 1946, Ernie and I were in Newport News, waiting for a maritime strike to end so our ship could sail on this special long trip. We got to two different places in Greece; we got to Palestine; we got to Mozambique; we got to South Africa; and we got to do some exploring in all these places. While the strike was on, we worked at part-time jobs where we could find them, but we couldn't find regular part-time work. We lived at the USO. While it was warm enough, they let us sleep on the tennis court at night, and then they let us sleep in chairs inside. They were very nice. We weren't even military, but they let us.

We had to stick around, because we didn't know when the strike might end, but we didn't have anything to do much of the time, so I did some exploring around the area. One day I was headed to Yorktown, a national historic site, and I got on a bus in Newport News, and the bus was full, with people standing in the well. I didn't know anything about racial segregation, but most of the people on the bus were black, from the back of the bus forward. There was one vacant seat toward the front, where the seats were parallel to the aisle, the three-seat benches. On the front end of one, there was a white person, and then there was a vacant seat, and then there was this middle-aged black man. Several white people were standing in the well, not taking the vacant seat. I stood in the well too for awhile and puzzled at this—I was eighteen and not too bright or informed about the

customs of racial segregation. I rode standing for several blocks, but Yorktown is quite a ways, and I figured, "Well, I don't care. I'm not prejudiced. These people around me must be prejudiced." So I sat down by the black man, and he got up and walked to the back of the bus and stood.

That was when I discovered what segregation was about, and I felt like hell. I'm this snotty-nosed kid, and I've done a terrible thing to this middle-aged man. Nobody said anything to me, and perhaps because I'm shy I didn't ask any questions. I didn't try to find out from anybody around me what had happened, but I gradually figured that the rule, whether by law or social custom, was that no black person and white person could sit side by side, and any white person could bump any black person. It was a shock to my system. I rode and rode, and I couldn't think of anything to do. I should have got up, which would have at least told people that I understood what I had done, I guess. I don't know.

That was a turning point in my life, because I knew from that point on what racial segregation in the South was. And during the Civil Rights Movement of the late Fifties and early Sixties, when all this stuff was going on and people were trying to get rid of segregation, you had defenders of the system saying, "Both races in the South worked this out together, and they both like it, and there's no sense of inferiority." (Of course, historically that's bullshit. I knew from my experience that that explanation was false or a lie.)

I'm a slow learner, but I had one other similar experience that worked out better. We shipped out of Newport News, but once we came back through New York City, and once through Houston. In Houston I got on a bus, and there was only one other person on it, an older, black woman about halfway back. Again, I didn't think

anything about it—I just wandered back and sat a couple of rows behind her. She turned around and said something to me, but I couldn't figure out from the accent what she'd said, and so I asked her to repeat it. The bus driver, a white man, said, "She's asking you if she can continue to sit there." In other words, the same goddamn rule! [laughter] Of course, I wasn't trying to get her to move to the back, and I said so. By my accent, they understood that I wasn't local, and I sort of apologized, and she stayed in her seat.

Those two experiences were my introduction to the reality of racial segregation. Prior to them I hadn't given any serious thought to civil liberties and civil rights, but I had a moral reaction that may have had something to do with my family's religious views. On racial matters, they didn't see things the way I did, but they hadn't had my vivid introduction to what actual segregation in the South was like at that time. I had a conversation with Ben later, and he couldn't see why those of us in the civil rights movement were doing this—at that point I was an undergraduate at KU and a member of a CORE group in Lawrence, and we were getting thrown out of cafes, and we'd sit-in at theaters . . . and we didn't win a damn thing! [laughter]

I had a conversation with Ben after I had participated in some of these CORE activities. Ben's viewpoint was that it wasn't good to make trouble. He didn't condemn what I was doing, but he didn't really see the point of it, and he felt that making trouble by holding sit-ins and that kind of stuff was getting a little rude, basically. There was just a lot of acceptance of existing conditions without understanding them in the way that I'd dramatically learned to understand them because of my trips abroad and because of those bus incidents.

3

After losing two semesters while working as a hand on the cattle ships, I began at the University of Kansas in the summer session of 1947. I had a Summerfield scholarship, so I didn't need to work, but I had to find a cheap place to stay. For the summer, I stayed in Battenfeld Hall, which was a university dorm. Then I discovered the cheapest place to live was the student co-ops. They were owned by a corporation which had a non-student board, except there was always a co-op resident on the board. The co-ops had been established in the 1930s, and by 1947, when I joined them, there were four or five houses.

In the co-ops, residents did all the work—we didn't hire anybody to do anything. We had one member who was a purchasing agent, who could buy food and other stuff for us, and then we cooked it ourselves. (At one point I baked a meatloaf containing Tollhouse cookies, because that was what we had to put in the meatloaf!

[laughter]) We washed the dishes; we kept the place clean. We did everything, which is very good. It taught me self-reliance and discipline, as the ranch had done. It was not just a housing area, it operated on the principles of the nineteenth century English workers' cooperative called Rochdale.

The governing board was made up of senior people from the community. One of the chief bankers in town, George Docking, who was later governor of Kansas, was the long-time treasurer. One of the members was Hilden Gibson (another Summerfield), who was a political science professor who had been involved in creating the co-ops. We had other prominent people from the community on the board, and they were the ones who technically owned everything, and they made the economic decisions. But at the operational level, it was run by the students entirely.

I spent five years at KU and was in the co-ops the entire time. One year I was in what was called the Don Henry Co-op, which was the second floor above Hixson's photography store in downtown Lawrence. Only twelve people could live there. The next year it moved to a big building just east of the campus. After that I lived for three years at the hill co-op. (The residents of "the hill" preferred to lower case its name.) The hill was converted out of a two-story brick building that had been the stable for the house next door, Harman Co-op, which was a girls co-op . . . a women's co-op. (We called them "girls.") The decision was made to convert this building, which was still basically sound, and we did almost all the work on that. It was very much self-reliance, but it was democratic group reliance.

In the late 1940s, a lot of students at KU were veterans of World War II, people who had had their edu-



Elmer Rusco, KU freshman.

cation interrupted by the war, and they were older, more experienced, and more serious than a lot of freshman are. Many were members of the co-ops. KU was a good school, and I got a good formal education, but the most important part of my education came through living in the co-ops and being a part of that group.

The co-ops were the center of the... well, we didn't have any name for it. You could call it either liberal thinking or Democratic left politics or something like that. There were a whole bunch of other Summerfields (Summerfield Scholars) in the co-ops, bright people, and the political range varied a great deal. But at one point we were known to the student newspaper, *The Daily Kansan*, as the "Red Beat." They thought we were communists. [laughter] We were regarded as wild-eyed radicals and communists; and there were a few communists among students at KU at that time, and a few of them lived in the co-ops, but they were not part of our group.

Intellectually, this was the most stimulating environment I've ever been in. Here were a lot of bright, serious people. We agreed on a general range of ideas that were interesting, but there was a great deal of diversity,

and so we would do our work during the day at the university, and then we'd come back and eat dinner and talk about politics and ideas. Every night after dinner we cleared away the dishes, and the resident whose turn it was washed them. Then we would sit around and talk about all sorts of serious issues—not girls, not football, but serious issues—for hours and hours. Lots of weekends I'd sleep in on Saturday morning (I could do it then), because I'd spent so many nights up in these bull sessions.

The hill only had about a dozen residents, but people would come from other co-ops to join in the nightly discussions. These discussions were wonderful, and so were the people who participated in them. For example, one of them, Stanley Kelley Jr., was the brightest person I think I've ever known, and in academia you run into bright people all the time. Stan was one of the returning veterans. He came from a little farm town in central Kansas called Chapman. He was a Summerfield, very creative and very bright, and he went on to a distinguished career. He's retired from the department of politics at Princeton and has published a number of books. We had a bunch of songs that we invented, satirical songs about politics, and some of them were very clever, mostly due to Stan's being clever.

You could probably call Stan a liberal, and, although we didn't label ourselves, we probably voted mostly Democratic. I remember going down to the polls to vote for Harry Truman in 1948; but I couldn't have, because I wasn't twenty-one yet. So what I think must have happened is I went down with a bunch of the veterans, who could vote, and my memory is confused. Anyway, we didn't think of ourselves as partisan; we thought

of ourselves as embracing moral and sensible ideas, which were basically left! [laughter]

Another of the leaders of this group was Albert Roland, an Italian. He was an English major at KU, and then he got a master's degree, and he had a subsequent career with the U. S. Information Agency. A very bright guy whose family was descended from Waldensians, a heretical group of Protestants back in the Middle Ages. (The church tried to stamp them out. They were in southern France, and there was a little enclave in a village called Torre Felicce, which is near Torino or Turin in northern Italy.) Albert had a friend, Annalisa Gersoni, who roomed with Mary, my wife, for awhile. Albert and Annalisa had been in the resistance as young people in Italy. They had been couriers and things like that.

Albert's political position was close to that of Max Ascoli, who also came over here from Italy and edited the Reporter magazine for years. They were both definitely non-communist, and in many respects anti-communist, but their politics were left. Dan Gallin, another of the co-op intellectuals, was a Romanian, and he was violently anti-communist, because the communists had taken over and controlled Romania. His father had been a diplomat for the Romanian government before the war. Dan was anti-communist, but he was a real radical, a Trotskyite.

The hill co-op put out two publications all the years we were there. One was called *The Dove*. It was a purely political paper representing general left views, but it had no party line at all, and it was irregularly published, although it was published over many decades by different groups. When we'd get enough money together to print an issue, there was a printer downtown who would run

it. Each number was usually four pages on cheap paper. The first article I wrote and had published in *The Dove* was about the merits of co-ops. (Co-ops are private enterprises. They get attacked as socialistic for some reason sometimes, but they're private enterprises.)

Albert started a real quarterly journal called *upstream*. (He liked lower case.) [laughter] It was a journal of politics and literature—we had everything from poems and short stories to essays on politics, and we had contributions from professors. And Dan Gallin was a very good artist, very talented, and we carried his stuff. We had everything. That was a larger publication than *The Dove*, and on better paper, so a few businesses in town would give us ads. Then we would hold *upstream* dinners—fundraising dinners—a couple of times a year, and we got good attendance. Chancellor Mallott of KU came and talked once.

One *upstream* panel discussion occurred because somebody had written a piece about racial discrimination in the South—I think about a lynching—and, since it was creative writing, he used the "n" word, rather than "negro," because the people doing this would have used it. So we had a passionate panel discussion over whether we should have printed things with the "n" word. The people who most objected to it were a few communists . . . at least one panel member was a communist.

Panels and presentations such as this were educational events, but they also raised money for publishing expenses. We did all the work in connection with getting our publications out and in connection with our special events. Once I was helping prepare food for an *upstream* dinner, and we had a last-minute surge of people coming in. We were making chicken pot pies or something involving chicken, and we stretched five chick-

ens somehow to serve about a hundred people. [laughter] It all took a lot of work, but we kept them going. In fact, *upstream* survived for a number of years after our cohort had gone on elsewhere.

There was kind of a distinction between the literary people and the political people involved in our publications. *upstream* attracted more literary types than *The Dove*, but the groups were overlapping, and being a part of that was an extremely stimulating and educational experience. In all kinds of ways, you did things you didn't know you could do, and you were encountering new ideas all the time. You were enveloped in this atmosphere of dealing with ideas all the time, and you embraced the experience.

When I enrolled at Kansas, I had no idea what I wanted to major in. Then I got in just by accident with the co-ops, with this group of people, and that was the most fascinating thing I'd ever experienced. The residents were primarily in the humanities and the social sciences, but there were some who were scientists. At one point, we had a chemists' co-op—almost every resident of it was in the chemistry department. But the group that I was with, who happened to be most of the leadership of the co-op, were the ones who were humanities oriented and interested in politics and literature.

Some of the best instructors that I had immediately after enrolling were people in the political science department. A young instructor named Rhoten Smith was really great. The first poli sci course I had, he didn't have us read the whole Republic, but he had us reading the Republic and discussing it. I don't agree with a lot of the conclusions that Plato reaches in the Republic, but it is one of the great books for raising the really big issues

you have to get into if you're concerned with politics. Rhoten Smith had us doing that in a freshman course.

Eldon Fields in the poli sci department was also a fascinating instructor, and I learned all kinds of things from him. I took constitutional law two semesters from Francis Heller, who, I think, was from Austria originally. He taught constitutional law the way they do in law schools—they require the students to read the cases, and you discuss the cases, and occasionally the instructor fills in. Mostly you argue the cases in class, and that's the best way of learning constitutional law. I don't remember that he had any particularly strong emphasis on civil liberties, but in a two-semester sequence, you have to deal with that if you deal with constitutional law, so I learned more than I thought I did, probably, about the importance of civil liberties.

When I went through KU, you couldn't declare a major till your junior year. The first two years, you got a liberal arts education. There were some features of it that were especially good, particularly the Western Civilization program, which was directed by Hilden Gibson. (Hilden was a Summerfield, and he was also very close to the co-ops. He didn't participate in the bull sessions with us, but he was very influential.) Western Civ required reading great books in the Western tradition. It was a six-credit thing, but you didn't have classes. Instead, you could sign up for regular meetings with an advanced student to discuss the books you were reading. (This was called proctoring, I think.) When you had finished the required reading, you would take the test.

The Western Civilization Program (really a great Western books program) was excellent, and the required reading may have had a greater impact on my future development as a scholar than anything else I experienced

in my formal undergraduate education. I read many more things from our general intellectual history than I otherwise would have, but I found myself getting interested mainly in what political scientists call "theory," which is really the history of Western political thinking. The first time I read Adam Smith and Machiavelli and Marx and all those people was in the program. Later in life I mostly taught theory when I was on the faculty at the University of Nevada, even though my research interests were elsewhere, and I felt confident to do that because of having gone through the Western Civ program at KU and developing a lifelong interest in the issues that were introduced in the reading.

Those of us who were co-op dwellers were also aided a great deal by a very well-known and respected economist named John Ise. One of his responsibilities at KU was to protect freedom of speech at the university. He was widely-known and a good friend of Alf Landon, the former Kansas governor who ran for president against FDR in 1936. He knew powerful people in the state and was secure in his authority. Once, while the Korean War was on, we were planning to publish a controversial article in *upstream*, and we asked his advice. He said, "Yes, go ahead and publish it. Nobody can do anything about it except to get rid of me, and they can't do that." [laughter]

Ise wasn't a radical economist—in fact, his basic textbook was by an institutional economist from the 1920s. But as a teacher, he was absolutely wonderful, because he would come out with the most outrageous things that would force you to think. I took a course in comparative economics from him, and one of the questions on the final examination was, "Would the Russian

Revolution have succeeded if the Germans had refused to let Lenin return to Russia during the war?" And this is on a final examination. [laughter] He would ask things of students all the time. He published a lot of stuff, but he later published a book on his philosophy of education called The Sales Problem in Education. It had all kinds of provocative things. He knew how to get people to think.

I probably decided to major in political science early on because of my involvement with the co-ops and their student leadership group. My long term goals were initially a little vague, but I knew I wanted to be an academic who was involved with actual politics in some way, applying my knowledge as a scholar to try to make things better. But I didn't really know what an academic career meant. I didn't know how you did it. I just knew that you kept going, and eventually you might end up in a place where you could both deal with ideas and have some involvement in your community, because you knew something that other people didn't know and hadn't had the time to learn. I wanted to combine those things.

One of my heroes for a long time was Harold Laski, who was in that category. He was an intellectual who was also active in the Labour Party before, and to some extent after, they got power after World War II in Britain. He was one of my role models, and I read quite a bit of Laski. My orientation from the beginning was how to combine the love of knowledge and learning with doing something practical that would help people. Somehow, that came out of the co-op environment and the knowledge that the co-ops were different and were a positive thing at KU and in general.

Being in the co-ops gave me practical experience. I knew that you didn't just spin images in your head and hope they somehow got carried out. You had to do the

hard, practical work of finding how you do everything . . . from digging a gas line over from Harman to the hill, so that we could bring gas into the hill when we were building it You had to do everything, and that combination has seemed important to me since. That's been my orientation from my undergraduate years on, and it grew out of the co-op experience.

When I moved into the co-ops, there was a student CORE group already existing. (CORE was the acronym for two levels of the same organization: local groups were Committees of Racial Equality, and the national one was the Congress of Racial Equality.) The first Committee of Racial Equality was created by some pacifists in Chicago in 1942 to protest racial discrimination, and it gradually spread on campuses . . . initially, more in the Middle West, I think, simply because of geographic proximity. I don't know when the CORE group was started at KU, but when I showed up, it was going, and I immediately joined because of the experiences I had had with segregation in the South.

I knew what racial discrimination was about, and there was lots of racial discrimination in Lawrence. The movie theaters downtown all had colored sections up in the balcony, and all the Negroes had to sit up there and know they couldn't sit anywhere else. There was a community group that included people from the campus, called the Lawrence League for the Practice of Democracy, the LLPD. Several professors, including several from the chemistry department, for some reason, were leaders in this, and there were other people from the community and some students. (Still my best friend in many ways, John Eberhardt, who lives in Denver, was a member of the LLPD, so we had contacts.)

The LLPD had an attorney, Phil Dergance, who was interested in the issue of theater segregation, and he found out that Kansas had passed a statute back in the Reconstruction era saying that no municipally-licensed business could practice racial discrimination. LLPD brought this to the attention of the city council. The theaters were licensed by the city, and the council repealed the licensing for the theaters as their response. [laughter] The theaters continued to operate anyway!

The catch was that without a license, the theaters could legally go on discriminating—what was illegal was to practice discrimination if you had a city license. In fact, the city council abetted the segregation of the theaters by repealing the requirement that they had to have a city license. So CORE held a sit-in. We didn't succeed, and nothing happened, but we had tried.

There were also lots of cafes and bars and other businesses around campus that discriminated against black people, wouldn't allow black customers. One of the most flagrant was Brick's Cafe, which was a half block north of the student union, right off the edge of the campus. It was the major cafe and beer hall really close to the campus, and it was frequented by members of the football team. (Most of the others were down a few blocks and around.)

Brick's absolutely would not serve blacks at all. So we got together a sit-in one afternoon when it wasn't busy. Groups of blacks and whites went in and sat down together, and when we weren't served, we just sat there, at least one black person in every booth and at every counter. (This was well before sit-ins began in the South. The technique came from CORE.) They told us they couldn't serve us, and we just politely sat there, it seemed like quite a long time. Then, here came the football play-

ers, and they picked us up one by one and carried us and put us outside. [laughter]. Of course, we didn't resist, partly because they were the football players, but also because we had the non-violent commitment through CORE. That was one of its principles.

So that didn't work. We got a lot of publicity, but Brick's didn't change its direction at all, and that may have had some indirect connection with a policy of the university. When I arrived at KU in 1947, the only housing group for students that admitted without racial discrimination was the co-ops. One of the Rochdale principles is "No discrimination by race." Another is "One person, one vote." The co-ops practiced these principles, so we had black people scattered throughout them.

The most important black student in my co-op was Wes Elliott. He was a very bright guy who went on and got his Ph.D. and taught at Fisk University for years. Wes was not only a very good student, he was also an athlete. He was a runner, and he was in the top level of athletes at KU. KU belonged to an athletic conference that included Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Nebraska, but it also included some Southern states, and the conference had a rule: "No black ath-



Elmer and Mary with Wes and Jean Elliott, KU co-op reunion, 1993.

letes can participate." Wes was one of the nicest people I've ever known, but he became the center of a really important dispute for the whole conference, and also for KU. He was a great athlete and a great person, but he was just the wrong race.

Wendell Walker was another black who lived in the co-ops. (The university dormitories wouldn't allow black students in at that point.) Wendell belonged to one of the black fraternities—there were a couple of them on campus. At one point, he tried to persuade me and some other white people to become members of these fraternities and live in their houses and advance integration in that way. Those folks were perfectly willing to do it. Well, none of us took that seriously. We loved the co-ops, and we didn't like fraternities. I thought of them as discriminatory on all sorts of grounds. None of us took it seriously.

At one point, I was detailed by CORE to write to the national NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, Thurgood Marshall's outfit, describing the segregated housing situation on campus and asking if the university's policy was unconstitutional. So I sent off the letter, and Constance Baker Motley, who was one of their attorneys and a distinguished one, wrote back. What she said—nicely, at some length, and diplomatically—was, "Of course it is!" At that point, the flat exclusion of black people from the dormitories was clearly unconstitutional.

Well, we didn't carry through, in part because none of us knew how to do a case. The *Brown v. Board of Education* case was already going on in Topeka, which is only forty-five miles west or so from Lawrence, but we didn't know much about it. At one point we had people come over from Topeka trying to raise money for the Brown case from us. We didn't have any money, and we

didn't really understand the significance of that issue. [laughter] So we didn't have any way of bringing a suit, really. If we'd gone to Phillip Dergance, the attorney in town who worked with LLPD, he might have suggested something we could do.

We were on good relations with the dean of women, Margaret Habein, who was a great person. A number of us from CORE requested a meeting with her to discuss the housing situation at the university. We started telling her what we had done and about the reply from the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. Before we got fully into that, she said, "We know. We know. And we're doing something about it. If you can wait awhile, we'll take care of the problem." It turned out that they already had in place a plan to build a big dormitory, which all freshman women would have to live in their first year. Then, after that, they could move to any dorm or sorority or out on their own, whatever. She said, "We're not talking about this in racial terms, but one of the purposes of this is that it will break the pattern. And we plan to do the same thing for male students as soon as we can."

We respected Margaret Habein very highly. And she liked the co-op, and she used to come and have dinner with us. [laughter] I'm sure it was not her idea of a really good dinner, but she was interested in this and very helpful. So we listened to her, and we believed her, and it worked.

Another thing we didn't know was that Franklin Murphy, the dean of the medical school, which was in Kansas City, had already desegregated there, and he became, shortly, the chancellor of the university at KU, and so he pushed that hard. But we believed her. They were moving. They did it in kind of an indirect way and a little slower than we would have liked, but they were

working through it. Raising all the sand we did may have been one of the things that brought that to her attention in the first place, I don't know, but she wanted to do the right thing. There was no doubt in my mind that she wanted to do the right thing.

I was never the president of our CORE group, but I was an officer. It was a very democratic group, and consensus was the major thing. We held regular meetings, and sometimes we invited speakers in, and we decided by consensus what to do. Our CORE group was about half white and half black. In the co-ops, the blacks—we called them "Negroes," of course—were a minority, but within CORE, it was probably about half and half. As with the co-ops, CORE was influenced by veterans. The chair of CORE, when I joined, was a woman. I think her name was Beth Bell. She had been in the military during World War II, and she was older than some of us. She was very able.

CORE at KU didn't draw entirely from the co-ops, but a good portion of the members were co-op residents. We knew something about discrimination, because we lived with blacks. There was one black resident who didn't take kindly to accepting discrimination, and he got in a scuffle with somebody right outside the police department in Lawrence, and he was arrested. (The other guy had made a racist remark.) We had to talk him into not being quite so aggressive. We knew about these things, because people we were living with, our friends, were running into these things all the time. So we weren't relying on abstract ideology at all.

At one point, my cousin Ernie and I went down to Wichita and started a CORE group there that didn't last very long. The CORE group that we got started picketed a theater in west Wichita, which is where the Riegers

lived. Aunt Beth didn't berate us or tell us we couldn't do this, but she told us that she and Herbert knew the owner of the theater and they were a little unhappy at CORE having picketed them.

I was a pacifist. While working on the cattle boats, I had seen firsthand the devastation of Bremen and Danzig that was caused by World War II. (There was a famous statement by a French general that Europe couldn't survive being liberated one more time!) [laughter] On the cattle boats, the people who were seagoing cowboys were mostly college students, who were able to go in the summer. A second group was people we called winos—alcoholics, people that couldn't hold a regular job. (On those ships, I learned more about alcoholism than I ever wanted to know.) Then a third group were pacifists.

During World War II, you had to serve. If you wouldn't cooperate at all, you went to prison—one of our dear friends, Bruce Miller, did that—but if you cooperated, you were sent to CPS (Civilian Public Service) camps around the country. Some of those were still going in 1946 . . . I don't know why. One of the groups who became seagoing cowboys were people released from the CPS camps to do it. On every ship, there would be committed pacifists, so we'd have all these discussions about pacifism, and I became a pacifist. I decided early on that I was not an absolutist—I couldn't say that violence in every situation, every category of violence, was unacceptable—but that most wars were wrong.

I became a pacifist. I joined the Fellowship of Reconciliation, FOR, as a result of what I saw on the cattle boat trips and these discussions. You have a lot of free time to talk with people while you're at sea. Sometimes we'd play hearts, and I got sick to death of that—I don't

like competitive games that much, so I finally stopped playing. Then you'd read a lot. And we had good discussions, many of them about pacifism. I learned a lot.

So I was a pacifist by the time I got to KU. Our group was divided on this, but we were generally skeptical of the Korean War, and we got in trouble with the administration at one point. They had never had any restrictions on our publications, but when we peddled an issue of *The Dove* which included some anti-Korean War sentiments, we were kicked off campus by somebody in the administration who didn't like it. [laughter] But we weren't systematically anti-war in the way that it developed in the Vietnam War.

The student elections were typically won by the fraternities, because they would form alliances and vote in blocs, and they could more or less require their people to vote. The Independents didn't have any kind of base like that. Well, one time one of the Independent movements among the students came to the co-ops and asked our assistance. I went to a meeting along with my girlfriend at the time, Ann Marie Buitrago, and we more or less blessed the movement. Nobody was very much involved in student politics, though, in our group.

While still an undergraduate, I also got involved with a statewide group that was trying to get the Kansas legislature to pass a Fair Employment Practices bill. My master's thesis was about this, because I had participated in attempts to organize support for it. I didn't belong to anything else. I did take school seriously, and I'm not the brightest of students, so I had to work at it. [laughter]

We had CORE, which kept us busy, and then there were those endless, but very stimulating discussions.

There was a beer hall two blocks east of the campus, and we used to go there and drink beer from time to time. I was never threatened by alcoholism, never attempted to drink heavily, but we would go down there and drink beer and go on with our discussions, and sometimes they were more lighthearted than some of the other discussions. [laughter]

Across the river, north of Lawrence, was the Mexican section, and we used to go over there to a Mexican restaurant called El Tampico. I liked Mexican food from the beginning. I loved the spices and the elaborate flavors, and I still do. General American cuisine tends toward just throwing a slab of meat on the fire and browning it and eating it. And the English tradition is not famous for a variety of tastes, of course, so I enjoyed Mexican food from the time I first experienced it. Of course, they had Mexican beer too. We'd go out there Friday nights or Saturday nights from time to time.

They also had an auction over there that we'd go to Friday nights. It was a weekend auction, and you could go through the stuff in advance and buy something. One thing I regret that I didn't buy was a white porcelain statue of a Ku Klux Klansman on horseback, carrying an American flag. I think it was only seventy-five cents, but nobody had any money. I've never seen anything like it since. I'd love to have that, because it was so gross. It was well done, but it was a Klan thing.

There were concerts on campus, and I'd go to those, or speakers would come through. And I always went to art galleries. There was only one art gallery on campus then, and that was right at the top of the hill, two blocks above the bar we used to go to. I never had any talent in anything, but I always enjoyed art, and I have ever since.

There was a natural history museum on campus, and they had, among other things, a stuffed form of, purportedly, the only horse to have survived the Custer massacre. I don't know how in the hell it ever got to KU, but there it was standing in the lobby. So I went to that museum and the art museum as much as I could, whenever I knew of anything going on. And generally in a university, you hear about these things.

I met Mary, my wife to be, in January 1951. Mary had gone to Antioch. She's a year older than me, and she went to Antioch College for a couple of years, but her mother and then her father died suddenly. Their deaths were very hard on her emotionally and left her with insufficient support to stay at Antioch. She dropped out and then spent several years in Topeka working at various things. She is very bright, and she'd always wanted to be a journalist, so she actually edited a neighborhood newspaper for about a year in Topeka all by herself. She was the entire staff. [laughter] Then she decided to return to school and transferred to KU.

While attending Antioch, Mary had met Coretta Scott, who later became Coretta Scott King. Antioch was noted for alternating periods on campus with periods when you actually worked at some kind of a job. Mary worked at a girls' school in Boston for a period of time, and that's where she first met Coretta Scott, who was also an Antioch student. Back in Yellow Springs, which is where Antioch was located, there was an NAACP student chapter, and Coretta and Mary were both members of that.

There was also a CORE group at the college, and Mary participated in its attempt to integrate a bar in Yellow Springs that didn't admit black customers. I don't

know how they got started on that—most of the small black population of Yellow Springs were Baptists, who never went to bars. [laughter] That was the last thing they were interested in, but the students took that as a project.

There was another black student at Antioch then named Leon Higginbotham. He later became a federal judge and was fairly well known. People who know the civil rights movement will recognize the name. So Mary had some early involvement with this kind of thing before it got national attention, and before similar things began to happen in the South, which was much harder than the rest of the country. The civil rights movement was bubbling up here and there all over the country, and both of us were to some extent involved in it as undergraduates.

Mary arrived at KU in the spring semester of 1951. Anthropology was a discipline that was new at KU, and she enrolled in the program and became its first graduate. She liked it primarily because it had such a broad view of things, which made it very interesting. Mary arrived in January of 1951, and I met her at a dance. Yes, I used to go to dances! [laughter] I never really learned to dance, but I went to some dances and co-op parties.

Mary lived in Henley House, a co-op that was formed by the YWCA. It was right across the street from Brick's. I went to a party, and somebody introduced us. Friends thought we were made for each other, and we did strike it off very well from the beginning, but it took quite a while—I didn't ask her to marry me till 1954, and we didn't get married till 1955. She finished up and got a bachelor's at KU, and then she went up to Lincoln and got a master's degree at the University of Nebraska. I was

in the army between 1952 and 1954, and when I got out, I went back up to Lincoln on my way to Berkeley for graduate work, and I asked her if she would marry me. She said "Well, maybe we can give it a try," or something like that. [laughter] But, if I'm still around by July, it'll be forty-nine years.

I went to two summer Student-in-Industry programs run by the national YMCA. The first was in Chicago in the summer of 1948. I worked at the Swift packing plant and lived at George Williams College, which was a YMCA college on the south side. They got us regular jobs in various industries, and they didn't tell people we were just students there for the summer, so I learned something about being a working-class person working in a factory.

The Swift plant was the biggest by far. I worked hauling raw meat into the room where they made sausages. I'd bring meat in big carts from where they ground it over to the place where they actually made it into sausages. When they started running low, they would let me know, and I'd bring in some more meat. I learned something about working class life, and I gained much more respect for workers in that situation than I ever had before.

In the sausage room, they had big, long stainless steel tables. At one end the sausage was in a big container, and they had men on each side. The container was under some kind of pressure, and the sausage would come out in casings. The men would release them, and along each side of the table—for eight hours a day and four hours on Saturday—stood women, who were mostly, I think, from Polish or other Eastern European backgrounds. They would stand there for eight hours every

day and four hours on Saturday, twisting the sausage into links. I think there were six women to a side, maybe fewer, and they stood there doing this mindless stuff for hours and hours a week. Of course, they talked with each other across the table, but, God, that must have been a hard way to earn a living! One of the women once said to me during that time, "Get a trade. Don't do this for the rest of your life."

In that huge sausage room, over in one corner, there were a bunch of metal carts which weren't used—they had water and rust in them. One day a federal inspector came by and saw them, and he shut down that whole damn room until we got them out of there and cleaned them up. I thought that's what they should do. There wasn't any danger at the moment, because we didn't use those carts, but they shouldn't have been there. And I thought that was great. The federal system for inspecting packing plants, which had begun way back in the first decade of the twentieth century, seemed to be working.

The Swift plant had huge, dark elevators that carried bunches of

things between floors. One day something almost surreal happened as I was near an elevator. A black man came out of it, pushing a big cart, and he was reciting lines from "Invictus," by William Ernest Henley:

> Out of the night that covers me,
> Black as the Pit from pole to pole
> I thank whatever gods may be
> For my unconquerable soul

He was speaking the lines aloud, but not to me—I didn't know him. These were things that gave me some under-

standing about what people who worked in factories were enduring.

That summer in Chicago, in addition to the work, we had regular weekly tours of various sites in the city, and we went to programs. Speakers were invited in: Saul Alinsky, who was very impressive, and a guy named Ralph Helstein, who was the leader of one of the labor unions in the area, and other people like that. And then Sunday morning we would go to church at various places. The people running the program wanted to give us exposure to a wide variety of ideas and notions and people. There's a Frank Lloyd Wright Prairie house on the edge of the University of Chicago campus; we toured that. It's the first time I ever heard of Frank Lloyd Wright. It was a wonderful experience altogether. And we did similar things in Pittsburgh the following summer, when I worked in a steel mill.

We lived in this YMCA on the edge of the black belt, and I always wander around wherever I am, so I did some wandering around there. It was in Chicago that I heard a style of black street preaching that was extremely impressive. I stood there on the edge and listened as this preacher started preaching in ordinary language, and then his voice would rise, and he'd start repeating things. He ended up with a very emotional chant, with response from the people standing around. It was an extreme form of a black preaching style, which I've seen elsewhere. It was very impressive. All of this had the effect of reinforcing in my mind the idea that there was a lot more variety in the world, and a lot more interesting things going on, than I had imagined when I was a boy. I had come to feel that you should learn about these things in one way or another, and that would be good. That's been fundamental to my views as an adult.

The following summer I spent working in a relatively small steel mill in Pittsburgh, the Heppenstall Company. It was a plant that took up about two blocks, and there was an administrative building across the street. I didn't do nearly as much there as I had in Chicago. They first put me on a crew painting or whitewashing walls, and I became an inadvertent rate breaker. I was painting the way we would back at the ranch, with the idea that the point is to get this done quickly! Whereas, of course, that's not how people cope with the meaninglessness of labor when they're trapped in a situation. But I didn't catch on. People on the crew tried to tell me to slow down, and I didn't do it, so they transferred me to security, where I didn't have to work with other people. I was a slow learner. [laughter]

I realized later that when you're faced with what is basically meaningless labor, and the only thing that



"So they transferred me to security "

you're getting out of it is enough money to live and support your family, the one thing you don't want to do is work yourself or some other poor guy out of a job by working faster than you have to! The managers, of course, would always be working for greater efficiency, and they'd want more done; but from the standpoint of the workers, it's better to not work too hard, because you're not gaining anything. You're getting paid for your time, anyway; plus, you may be working yourself or somebody else out of a job by working too hard.

The major gate was at the front of the building; then they had another gate on one side, which had a security box. Nobody ever came in the gate, so they sent me out there to sit for a while. Then they put me on the night patrol. I alternated between the graveyard shift and the swing shift, week to week. I was young, and that didn't bother me, the changing hours and all. When I had the graveyard shift, I had a special key, and I had to go around and check a number of different spots in both buildings. I had to go through the whole plant every hour, and if I didn't, alarms would ring somewhere. I had to turn keys to certify everything was all right. So that's what I did for most of the summer. I didn't see many other people, and I was able to read in between patrols, and I never made a mistake—never set off an alarm. Of course, I wasn't armed, and if there had been anybody robbing the place or something, I wouldn't have been able do a damn thing, but I was in a uniform, and that's what I did. [laughter]

Other summers in college I sometimes worked in construction if I could find a job. I also got back to the ranch in the summer as much as I could. Sometimes they could pay me, and sometimes they couldn't, but I always made enough to get me through the school year. And if I hadn't earned quite enough, there was the Flower

Fund. You could go in at the beginning of the semester and borrow money and pay it back without interest over two, three months in the semester. I have no idea what the origin of that was, but it obviously was designed to help everybody get over the spikes in expenses you had pay at the beginning of the semester. I occasionally had to do that.

4

I spent five years at the University of Kansas. I got a bachelor's degree in three- and-a-half years, partly because I took some summer classes, then another year-and-a-half to get the master's degree. I was planning to go on with my education, and I had been accepted at the Maxwell School at Syracuse University in New York. I had applied because it was public service oriented, and I already had that orientation. (I originally had hoped to go to Johns Hopkins, because a couple of my best friends were there, but I couldn't figure out how to get enough money to do that. Somehow it was possible at Syracuse.)

Then I got drafted. I had basic training and engineer training, both, at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, in the center of the state. Then, because I had a master's degree in political science, they offered me some type of information officer job. (But I wasn't an officer; I was an enlisted man.) The troops in your unit were all called together, and you read to them what the defense depart-

ment had told you about what was going on in the world that week. I didn't think this sounded like anything I wanted to be doing.

I had previously turned down a chance of going into officer training. When I was drafted, I was interviewed, and I could have applied for officer training school, but I didn't want to be an officer. I was still enough of a pacifist that I didn't want a lifetime commitment to that. And one time somebody talked to me about going into the Counter Intelligence Corps, and I knew being a spy was not what I wanted to do.

So they made a clerk out of me, because I could type! [laughter] They made me the clerk of the battalion that was in charge of training at Fort Leonard Wood, so I just stayed there. That was a very boring job. It was a five-and-a-half-day week most of the time, and there wasn't anything to do on the post and the small town outside. It was a very boring place. Somebody discovered that I knew a little bit about law, so they wanted to convert me into part of the criminal justice system. They wanted me to be drawing up indictments—or whatever the military equivalent is—typing up all this stuff, and I didn't want to partici-



"Being a spy was not what I wanted to do."

pate in that either. So I asked to be transferred, and they sent me out to California, to Camp Stoneman.

At Fort Leonard Wood, the small number of enlisted guys who worked at the battalion level all lived in the same barracks. A major was in charge of our operation, but a new lieutenant came in once, and he had some authority over us—I can't remember what. Anyway, he had just come in from West Point. Our gossip was that he'd been kicked out of West Point for cheating, because they do that periodically. He was really gung-ho. So one day we got a shipment of metal cabinets for our barracks, and this lieutenant decided to keep us up after our work to about 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning, assembling the cabinets. I don't know why; there was no reason to. I didn't like it, but I didn't complain. But somebody—one of our number, I never knew who—went to see the post inspector general about it. Soon after the complaint was made, the major called us in to a conference room in the building and begged us to drop the charges. He apologized and said, "It won't happen again," and he begged us to drop the charges, which we did. He said, "I know this is a mistake. I apologize."

From that incident, I learned that institutions like the inspector general or the ombudsman, which I hadn't heard of before then, really can be effective, even without formal authority, in getting a decision reversed. In our army, advancement in the officer corps is very easily cut off if you have anything in your personnel file that looks bad when the next round of promotions or assignments comes up. You're not going to advance, and you may be the one they drop when they have to cut force size. It's a very tough system. We were threatening to the major, and he understood immediately. (It was a stupid thing to do, anyway.) It taught me that there are

institutional ways, even in a highly authoritarian institution like an army, to control behavior.

There are many institutions of this kind in the world, and they are very important. I just recently learned that Europe has a committee on torture which has jurisdiction all across Europe. It has the authority to investigate complaints concerning any institution where people are confined, whether it is a mental hospital or a high-security prison, It has no authority to reverse decisions, but it does have the responsibility of making reports about its findings, and those reports are extremely influential Then there is the ombudsman. That term was invented in Scandinavia, and many of the countries in that region have such institutions. I have come to believe that those are very important ways of checking abuses of power.

As I said, I was transferred from Fort Leonard Wood to Camp Stoneman, which was in Pittsburgh, California, about forty miles northeast of San Francisco. It was where soldiers were held in preparation for being sent to Japan and Korea. Because I could type pretty well, I had to type the morning reports—daily reports that listed all personnel in the unit by initials and numbers and things like that and told exactly what their status was. There were lots and lots of people going through, and the rule was that if you made more than three errors on a page, you had to do the thing over again. (You could erase up to three or something, but after that you had to start over again.) I was slow, but I was able to do that by that time, so that was what I did. I've always been able to concentrate very well on what I'm doing. At one point, I think to test me, they let a dog loose in the room, running around while I was working, to see whether I was going to be able to keep going and keep concentrating. [laughter] But I did!

That's what I did, and the work wasn't any more inspiring than it had been back at Fort Leonard Wood. But it was in the Bay Area. I got to see a little bit of San Francisco; we went to Chinatown and things like that. San Francisco is still my favorite city in the country. I just loved the Bay Area. Everything was interesting. Harry Bridges was there, and the feds were still trying to deport him as a communist. He was a communist; he admitted that. But they couldn't prove he was a member of the Communist Party. [laughter] They finally failed.

Sally Stanford, who used to be a madam somewhere, had a restaurant in Sausalito across the bay, and Harry Bridges went in there once, and he went into the bathroom, and a couple of guys attacked him physically. And in the report in the San Francisco Chronicle, Bridges was quoted as saying, "I could tell they weren't friends of mine." [laughter] Apparently, they were connected with a rival union. He was the International Longshoremen Workers Union head.

While I was in the army, *Brown v. Board of Education* was handed down by the Supreme Court, May 17, 1954. I remember it precisely. The San Francisco papers ran the entire opinion, minus footnotes, and I read it all. That was a turning point in my life, because I realized for the first time what law could do to change even something as entrenched as racism. Of course, I was more optimistic, as many people were, about exactly what would change, but the decision did make enormous changes in American life. "So, the Supreme Court could do this . . . ," I said to myself. "The courts can do this. Wow! The Constitution does count for something! [laughter] You can change practices that are morally wrong."

Because of *Brown v. Board of Education*, I took out a membership in the ACLU, and I've been a member

ever since. If I had known more, I would also have taken out a membership in the NAACP, because it was their litigation that produced that result. But the ACLU had filed a brief in the case, and now I knew the ACLU was committed to civil liberties, which, in my view, include civil rights as a subset. So I joined the ACLU right after May 17, 1954. I later became a life member of the NAACP.

While I was amazed at the ability of the legal system to change discriminatory practices, I later learned that the supporters of various amendments and causes were not necessarily against *all* forms of discrimination. Not everyone, for example, knows why the 1964 federal Civil Rights Act outlawed not just racial discrimination in employment and public accommodations, but also gender discrimination in most cases. The reason for that is that some opponents of the Civil Rights Act believed that if they included prohibitions on sexual discrimination, they would kill the bill. These provisions originated in the house, I believe, and it's quite clear that they were inserted with the hope that this would defeat the entire bill. The point is that the opponents of civil rights were perfectly willing to accept a prohibition on discrimination by gender, but not a prohibition on discrimination by race.

This is similar to what happened between the time of the rise of abolition in the nineteenth century and the drafting of the Fifteenth Amendment. For decades the abolitionists and advocates of women's suffrage were cooperating and working together. But when the Fifteenth Amendment came up in Congress as a way to guarantee the voting rights of black males in the South, the advocates of the Fifteenth Amendment deliberately would not include discrimination by gender in their proposal, be-

cause they were afraid that they would then not get enough votes to carry the measure. It's the opposite of what happened in 1964.

Both of these matters show very clearly that this basic principle is one that has a very wide application. At particular moments in time, the discrimination, prejudice, and, frankly, stupid thinking that prevail may prevent things from being linked together in the same legal documents. But they *are* very closely linked together.

An additional example is one that almost nobody knows anything about. *Brown v. Board of Education* not only overruled the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case and said that states could not create schools segregated by race, but it did so specifically on the basis of race. Nothing in the Fourteenth Amendment, on which it relied, said anything about race. The crucial part of the amendment for this position is that "no state shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." In this case, it dealt with racial discrimination, but nothing in the equal protection clause mentions race.

About a month before May 17, 1954, when the Supreme Court issued *Brown v. Board of Education*, they also decided a case from Texas, I believe, which outlawed discrimination against Hispanics. That is the term used in the case, and the attorney for the Hispanics in this community had carefully documented a number of instances in which Hispanics were treated in an inferior manner. The Supreme Court said that the "equal protection of the laws" clause of the Fourteenth Amendment outlawed such behavior. It did not have to be on racial grounds. In fact, it wasn't on racial grounds in this case, because the people bringing the case identified the Hispanics on whose behalf they were seeking legal protection as being racially white. If in the Brown case the Su-

preme Court had used the same logic, they would have expanded greatly in effect the meaning of the provision, and they would have stayed away from race as the basis for this decision.

I also believe that the Fourteenth Amendment outlaws gender discrimination, when it comes to marriage, for the same reason that it outlaws discrimination on the basis of ethnicity that does not involve race, as in the case that I just mentioned. I believe it was Casey Stengel who said, "I never make a prediction, especially about the future." [laughter] Nevertheless, I predict that in a few years, May 17 will be a nationally recognized date for the expanse of liberty, not just because that was the day on which the United States Supreme Court handed down the Brown decision, but also because that was the date in 2004 on which the highest court in the state of Massachusetts began the process of extending full marriage rights to persons of the same sex.

5

San Francisco was a beautiful city, and so was Berkeley, and the University of California at Berkeley was a great university, so I decided that when I got out of the army, I'd go to Berkeley for graduate school if they'd accept me. And they did. That's why I got my Ph.D. from Berkeley. [laughter] Purely by accident. I had planned to go back East to go to Syracuse.

Following my discharge, I was eligible for the G.I. Bill, and that was one way that I could make it financially at Berkeley. The G.I. Bill wasn't much, but it was just enough to make a decisive difference. Otherwise, I don't think the army had much impact on me. I certainly didn't have much impact on the army! [laughter] We weren't basically very sympathetic to each other.

I started at Berkeley in the fall of 1954. I realized only in retrospect that when I moved from being an undergraduate to being a graduate student, I was supposed to ratchet up my performance. As an undergraduate, I

had almost entirely A's, and as a graduate student at KU, I had about half A's and half B's, which should have told me something, but I didn't get it. When I got to Berkeley I found out what real work was and what was really expected of you. A graduate student association called GAPS (Graduate Association in Political Science) had developed a recommended reading list for incoming graduate students. At Berkeley, you had to take prelims (Ph.D. preliminary exams) in five different fields. Well, they had this list of suggested readings in all these fields, and it was something like twelve pages long on legal paper, and most of the entries were single line entries for books—only a few articles got in there. I looked at that, and I just about quit. I said, "There's absolutely no way I'm going to read all this stuff." I'd have to spend the next twenty years to read all of it.

I figured out later what had happened. They had something like twenty-two faculty members in the poli sci department at Berkeley. And what they did was obviously go around and ask each one what books would you recommend for an incoming graduate student? And then they just put them all together! [laughter] I was naïve enough at first to think there was some expectation that you're going to read all this stuff. However, in one of my first seminars there were five major books assigned, and those were just the beginning of what you were supposed to do. I worked much harder than I ever had before, which was good for me, and I survived, but I always felt that I was under real pressure.

I was mainly interested in parties and elections and pressure groups—that field. I decided that's what I wanted to emphasize, so I did get some instruction that was important for me later on. One of my courses the first semester was on survey research, which Berkeley

had just recently begun. (They didn't even have any survey research organization connected with the department.) I took a course from Warren Miller, who had come from the University of Michigan, which had a first-rate survey research organization. He was also with an organization that would conduct national surveys every presidential year, trying to forecast their outcome. They were dealing with theoretical questions of how you can find out what mass electorates, as well as elite groups like parties, do and how they function. He was very, very good, and so I had an excellent graduate course in survey research my first semester there. We never actually participated in anything in connection with a survey, it was all theoretical, but Warren was a good instructor, and he would give practical descriptions from time to time about how the real process was done, and that was very good.

The next semester I had a course from a man named George Belknap, also from Michigan, about dealing with quantitative data, and I learned Guttman scaling. They don't use it anymore, but before computers, somebody named Guttman (a psychologist, I think) figured out that if you had a whole series of legislative votes, and you arranged the votes in the right way, you could tell whether there were patterns. He built a big board that you stuck pins in, and you moved them around, and you could easily see that sometimes the voting on item A was not related to that on B, but that other times they were part of the same pattern. It was a step forward in analyzing various kinds of data that might turn out to be items on a scale.

I took a statistics course, which I had never done before. One of my mistakes at KU was that I didn't take any mathematics—I wasn't interested in mathematics. I had had good high school algebra and trigonometry

classes and gotten good grades, but I was too dumb to realize that math had all kinds of potential benefits. [laughter] So, at a time when political science was moving toward becoming more sophisticated statistically and mathematically, I wasn't able to go that way, because I didn't have any mathematical background. I picked up the obvious statistical stuff fairly well, but I'd never learned how to do the more complex kinds of things, and that was a mistake.

I got some very good courses on what began to be called "behaviorism" in political science, connected with my interest in parties, elections, pressure groups, and so forth. Then I just ran into some extremely interesting professors who didn't fit any particular category, but who theoretically were very interesting. One was Grant McConnell, who later went to the University of Chicago. He introduced me to organizational theory through the work of Robert Michels, who was a Swiss sociologist in the early part of the twentieth century. (He wrote a book called *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*.) Michels argued that there was a series of hypotheses that were well supported by evidence from the Western European Labor and Social Democratic parties of his time, or Socialist parties. (It was just before World War I. There hadn't yet occurred the division between the Socialists and the Communists.)

Michels outlined a significant theoretical set of reasons for believing that regardless of ideology, all these organizations were oligarchical. McConnell argued that this was a serious scientific theory, which I thought it was, too, with everything very clearly stated as hypotheses—stated so that you could theoretically test them empirically and so forth, to show that ordinary large-

scale organizations of any kind (bureaucracies, whatever you want to call them) are inherently oligarchical. But McConnell argued that also shows why democracy in modern nation-states can be democratic, because if you have the basic constitutional structure to protect civil liberties, and if you have real competing political parties, they will check each other, and the electorate will make the decision between them.

It's naïve to think that what the electorate really does is pick individuals. It picks the parties that will rule, even in our country, where a lot of people don't recognize we have a party system that runs things. Michels pointed out that you can modify this theory to show why a large, modern nation-state can have a democratic system, although it doesn't operate like the idealized version in a democracy. Seymour Martin Lipset, who was a sociologist, wrote a book arguing along the same line, based upon the governance of the International Typographical Union, which had an internal two-party system, very like the two-party system in the United States.

I've never been able to develop McConnell's thought based upon this set of ideas systematically, but my dissertation built on that . . . although the few people who have read it didn't seem to notice it. [laughter] McConnell was one of the most interesting people I've ever met, and a nice guy; but you'd be trying to read all this theoretical stuff and assimilate it, and he'd come into class and say he'd just read some new book by Walter Lippman or something, and he thought everybody ought to read it, because it was really interesting. I learned a lot from him, even though I haven't fully developed all those ideas yet.

I had three years of coursework—between 1954 and 1957, I was taking courses. Occasionally, I would be

a reader for introductory classes, and occasionally I taught the main introductory course for political science. Peter Odegard gave the lectures, and then graduate students taught people in smaller groups.

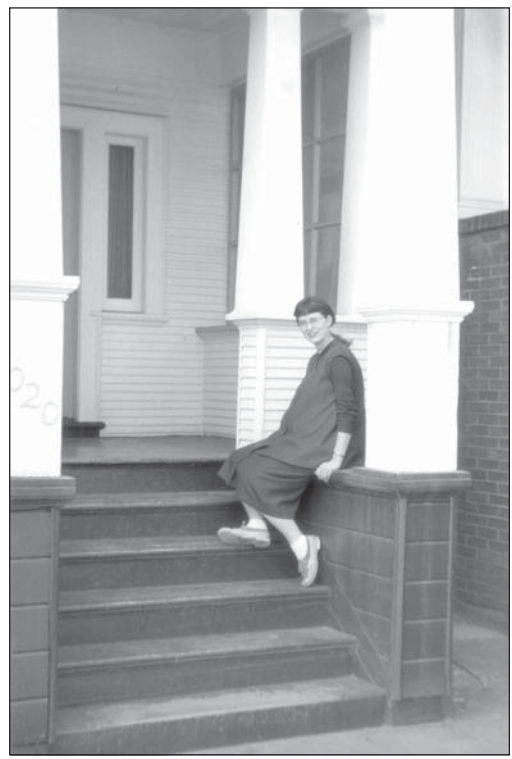
I was very lucky, because while I was at Berkeley, Hannah Arendt taught there for a semester, and I got a seminar from her. She was outstanding. The latest *New York Review of Books* has an article about somebody republishing her great book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. It's a marvelous book. It's dense—you can tell she's German. [laughter] But footnotes can illumine a whole area of knowledge for you. Arendt did a great deal to shed light on the phenomenon of totalitarianism and of genocide as a deliberate governmental policy by major countries that had been democratic. It was a fascinating book, and she was fascinating. For her seminar, I did a paper on the fascist government in Italy, which she didn't think was genuinely totalitarian. That wasn't one of my great achievements, but I learned a lot from her. She was a person of great dignity and moral strength. I learned some ways of dealing intellectually with all the horrors of the twentieth century, and I think that seminar eventually influenced my research and writing on racism.

During my three years of course work at Berkeley, I had a variety of different experiences intellectually, as well as advancing in my own field, and I did some work in theory. We had Sheldon Wolin, one of the soundest people on political theory in this country. He later moved to Princeton or somewhere, but I had a course in the history of political theory from him. And I had courses from Lawrence Jacobsen, who is also very good in that field. In comparative government, there were two pro-

fessors, and I somehow missed taking the famous seminar from the one that most people thought was the best.

Mary and I married in the summer of 1955. We got an apartment at 3020 College Avenue, and Mary got a job in Berkeley, working for the state health department. She worked for about nine months; I can date that because she apparently conceived the first time she could have. [laughter] Kathy was born something like ten months after we were married.

In Kansas a lot of my education occurred outside the classroom. I did not have a similar experience at Berkeley. There was no group that I was in any way affiliated with, but in the university everybody was talking about important ideas all the time, and everybody was coming to campus to lecture. I heard Scotty Reston from the *New York Times* when he came through. I met Roger Baldwin of



3020 College Avenue, Berkeley. *"Mary apparently conceived the first time she could have."*

the ACLU for the first time during this period, because he came to lecture, and there was a small group of people in the ACLU who met in somebody's home and talked with him.

I almost heard Martin Luther King Jr. when he came through, but I had a conflicting appointment to do an interview with Caspar Weinberger, who was an attorney at that time in San Francisco. The interview was very important for the research I was doing for my dissertation, and Weinberger had agreed to see me before I knew Martin Luther King was coming. When King was to speak, I had a few minutes to spare before I had to leave campus to meet Weinberger, and I thought, "Well, I can't call this guy up and ask him to make another appointment for a mere graduate student. I'll stand in the back of Wheeler Auditorium and just see what Martin Luther King looks like when he comes in, and then I'll go. " So I was waiting, and the fire marshal came in and said, "All you guys standing around have to leave." They had another room where the sound would be piped in, but I just went across the bay and did my interview. So I missed my chance to see or hear Martin Luther King Jr.

I wasn't an activist while I was a graduate student, mainly because I was too busy with my studies and my family. There are very good evolutionary reasons why people love children, especially their own. Human babies are helpless without a great deal of love. We hadn't planned to have a child right away, but we had Kathy, and then two years later Frank, and we were besotted with our children. We thought they were the most beautiful things, so, if we had any time, we spent it with them. Mary stayed home to take care of the kids until both were in school—we were old fashioned in that respect.

Most of our activities were centered around the kids. I was working very hard studying for the prelims, and I did some occasional teaching, and I did some dissertation research before I left Berkeley. I was too busy to do anything organizationally.

The preliminary exams weren't really preliminary. They were essentially the finals! If you didn't pass, you could not continue in the program and write your dissertation. The only other thing before the dissertation was the oral proposal for the dissertation, which is not a good idea, I think—before you actually do something, you don't know for sure what you're going to do. And then the dissertation.

I started taking the prelims as Kathy was born. Kathy was born in Kaiser Hospital in Oakland, and I was there with Mary early in the day, but I had a prelim the next day, and I had to take some books back to the library that were on reserve. While I was gone, she was born. I returned and was going up to the waiting room, and I met Mary being brought down. It's still moving . . . that expression of pride and joy she had on her face—it was so wonderful.

The first time that I ever froze on an exam was my first prelim. [laughter] I didn't freeze completely, but I really couldn't remember anything. At Berkeley you had to have five prelims. Everybody had to take theory; everybody had to take American government; and then you chose three others. Well, I chose parties, politics, et cetera, comparative government, and administration. Administration was the one that I knew the least about. I don't know that I ever had a course at KU in it, but at Berkeley I had Dwight Waldo, who was a wonderful teacher, for my main source of knowledge about administration. He was concerned about organizational theory,



and McConnell was concerned about organizational theory. So in some fields I was prepared, but I knew less about public administration than any other field, so when I took that exam, I felt I had flunked it. I didn't, fortunately. Then, the others were much easier to take.

My oral proposal for the dissertation, I thought I had failed. Following McConnell's orientation, I had decided to do a study of Artie Samish, who was supposed to have been the secret boss of California. In many ways he was for years and years. My title was *Machine Politics, California Style: Arthur H. Samish and the Alcoholic Beverage Industry*. It was partly a theoretical thing about ways to organize for elections, and then it included a case study of Samish. By that time Samish had been overthrown.

Samish had developed a political structure for helping recruit and elect people to the legislature based upon an interest group. He was hired by the brewers of

the state. At that time they had various laws enacted to keep national breweries out of California, at least restrict them in their operations, and the local brewers had a political fund. Five cents on every barrel of beer produced every month went into a special fund, which was administered by Samish. He used it to corrupt the legislature, not by bribes, but by helping elect people. That was a period when the parties were very weak, and so he could do that, and he was very astute. He had a bloc of legislators in both houses, and through this bloc, he controlled the public morals committees, which is where legislation involving alcohol and its control went for decades. The public morals committees also dealt with cigarettes and gambling and other things like that, because California always had some legalized gambling. He controlled this committee for decades and was paid as a lobbyist by these industries. I was able to show that, pretty well, I think.

6

I finished the prelims and the oral exam in advance of writing a dissertation, and then I applied for and got a one-year job at San Diego State College. They had two one-year jobs. The other guy got his degree during the year, and the next year they only had one opening, so he got that opening. So I had to leave, but I wasn't finished with my dissertation. During the year, I was able to go up between semesters to Los Angeles and study transcripts of court cases that had dealt with corruption in the system for handing out alcoholic beverage licenses during the Samish era. I was able to do some more research, but I didn't get much writing done, so Mary and I figured we'd just go back to Berkeley, and I'd finish the dissertation there, which is what we did.

In the summer of 1958, after my two semesters teaching, we were able to live in the home of a San Diego State faculty member who was away for the summer, which was very nice, and then I got a little money work-

ing for the county Democratic Party. Mostly, I registered voters, and I learned some interesting things. One reason you don't have real machine politics, of the old kind that you once had in Chicago and Philadelphia and New York, is that Americans are so mobile that, in many parts of the country, there are no stable neighborhoods in the way there used to be. I'd get a list of voters in some part of San Diego, and I'd drive out in the evening, because people would be home then, and at least half the addresses would be wrong, even though the address list was relatively recent. So I didn't get much done. That didn't matter, but it taught me something.

At the end of the summer, we went back to Berkeley. I was hoping to find a part-time job that would pay me enough so that we could support the family—Mary was still staying home taking care of the young kids—and then I would have half my time to write. But 1958 was a year of recession, and I couldn't find anything steady. So I took a series of jobs. I parked cars; I typed; I worked for a time at an oil company measuring gasoline levels in tanks; I worked for the post office. I'd work for anything I could find for awhile, until I got enough money, and then I'd stop and write. Mary would type the dissertation while I was working. So we got through the year very well, and it was a great year in many ways.

We lived in the Easter Hill public housing project in Richmond, California, which is basically a working-class community up the Bay a bit from Berkeley. And this was a great place, and it had been designed by somebody who had real imagination. The site had been a quarry of some kind, and it was very irregular in the beginning. They had big, green rocks sitting around, some of them ten feet tall, others smaller. They had left those in place, which made it kind of attractive, and instead of

creating a grid of cross streets, they followed the contours, which meant that you couldn't speed through the project. All streets turned enough that you had to go slow, so they didn't have to worry about having little kiddies run over in the street because people were speeding—you couldn't.

Then they had rows of two-story apartments, seven or eight in a block right out pretty close to the street. There weren't really front lawns, which was kind of messy—we didn't take care of ours during the year. But in back, instead of an alley, they had a nice grassy area. They had clotheslines—we didn't have dryers. They had clotheslines and sidewalks in this grassy area, and no vehicles could go there. You could park in the street, or you could park in lots at the end of the blocks of houses, but no cars could drive back there, which meant that the kids could play. The young kids could play in that area safely, and one adult could supervise the whole bunch of them, and I did that from time to time during the year.

There were various things like that—really wonderful planning that doesn't seem to have affected public housing many other places. When we first moved into our apartment, we didn't have any shades or anything on the windows, and Mary was nursing Frank, our young kid, and a tour bus stopped right outside. [laughter] Everybody craning over, looking in—that's when we found out it really was a model project, and tour buses came through all the time!

At the end of the year, I got another one-year job at the University of Idaho in Moscow. Well, I wasn't getting much research and writing done during all this time, because of all this movement. Nonetheless, that was when I came up with my first publication. I don't put it in my vita now, but when I applied for a job at Nevada, that was

the only thing on my vita. It was embarrassing, because of the way it had been handled. I sent in this rough draft, and they published it with some errors in it and didn't ask me to correct them. But I enjoyed that year, and I finished my dissertation while at Idaho and was awarded the Ph.D.

The next year I worked as an intern with the California Assembly. I think it was a Ford Foundation program. I was interested in legislative matters and had had some experience. (I had been a page in the Kansas Legislature one session when my uncle was in the Kansas House.) And I had interviewed legislators for my master's thesis and dissertation, so I spent nine months doing that.

I might have had a chance of becoming clerk of the assembly, because Arthur Ohnimus, who some people thought had been there since before California became a state, was ready to retire. [laughter] And because I had a Ph.D. by that time, he came around once and was obviously exploring whether I would be interested in applying for that job. But I decided not to on two grounds. My voice is not good, and the main thing that the chief clerk did was to read as rapidly and as clearly as possible the numbers and titles of bills, so that you could meet the requirement that they would actually be introduced. That is not very inspiring work, and I figured I didn't have the voice for it anyway.

The major thing I learned from that experience was that research in legislative bodies is not like research in a university. What is precious in universities is freedom of research. But I knew that in a legislative setting of any sort, I had to take orders from my bosses, and I never wanted to do that. So I never seriously considered going into a career of that sort.

Later, I had another opportunity to get into a legislative setting when Art Palmer retired as long-term research director of the Nevada Legislative Counsel Bureau and I was at the University of Nevada. Art began sort of exploratory talks: "When I retire, would you think about it?" I don't know whether anything could have developed in either case, but in neither case was I interested, because I knew that kind of research is not free in the way it is within the university.

While an intern in the California legislature, I was assigned to the elections and reapportionment committee, and that year it was the redistricting committee. So I learned something about how that's done. What did Mark Twain say about legislatures? Something like, "You don't want to watch how sausage is made." You really don't want to learn how the redistricting process is carried on. [laughter]

That was kind of an interesting year, following which I got a job at Parsons College in Iowa. The car we owned when we went there was an old Ford from some time in the 1950s. It used so much oil that I bought oil in three-gallon cans. I didn't even bother to use the dipstick. It began to make a noise kind of like a death rattle when it was running out of oil. [laughter] When it did that, I would stop and pour in some oil.

And it used fuel pumps at a precocious rate. Every so often the engine would stop running, and you'd check it out. It always turned out to be the fuel pump failing, so we bought reconditioned fuel pumps and carried them with us. [laughter] And I learned how to do that. I didn't know anything else, so if the car stopped and nothing else would do it, you could pin it down to the fuel pump. You simply replaced the fuel pump.

Well, we had been relatively low income for a long time, and that was the kind of thing we did. I had thought the salary I was getting at San Diego State was wonderful—it was just below $5,000—and I'd thought, "Wow, this is great money!" We'd had so many years before and after that, years of moving and not getting paid very much, that we had accumulated all kind of deficits. So the money Parsons offered influenced my decision to go there. But mostly it was because I thought Parsons was involved in the kind of educational innovation that I approved of.

7

I wasn't one of the department's top students, and when they started recommending me for jobs, they didn't recommend me to places like Harvard or anything like that. While working on my dissertation, I took a job at San Diego State University, and then taught at the University of Idaho on a one-year appointment. In 1961 and 1962, I taught at Parsons College, in Fairfield, Iowa. That was another learning experience. I learned things I didn't want to know [laughter] Parsons had been a small, and not very good, Presbyterian college. It was taken over by Millard Roberts, who was a Presbyterian minister who had a Ph.D. in the history of religion from Chicago. He had corrupted Parsons so that it became basically a crooked enterprise. But I didn't know that.

I had gone to Parsons for two reasons. One was that they paid a higher salary than most other places were paying at the time. I could have gone to a teacher's college in Missouri for the same amount of money, but it

had a teaching load of five courses a semester, so I knew I wouldn't be able to do any research. Part of it was the money, but the main reason was that Parsons advertised itself as an educationally experimental college that was trying to give students a second chance by accepting people who had flunked out of other colleges.

Parsons was very savvy about money. Beardsley Rumel, one of the financiers who was a public spirited kind of guy, looked at the problem of small colleges in economic difficulty and concluded that they could put themselves on a better basis. He wrote a book called *Notes to a College Trustee*, and I had read this. He recommended that they have one or two big introductory courses—like universities—in each field, rather than trying to keep all classes small, and he worked out the economics of it. He said it'd make very little difference in the burden for instructors, but it would revitalize the college. This was the early 1960s, a period of reform because of the Kennedy administration, and I thought, "This is a good thing."

Because Parsons paid slightly higher salaries, they said they had higher quality faculty than you would normally get at some small colleges that weren't doing well. They sent me a copy of the catalogue, and it appeared to be true. Most of the listed faculty had Ph.D.s, and they were from Harvard and Princeton and all the good schools. So I decided, "Well, this sounds interesting," and I took the job.

I joined the political science department, technically as the chair, but we only had one other instructor, Bob Stern. President Roberts had told me that we would have another instructor who would be teaching one of the beginning courses. That didn't develop, but I didn't

think anything about it. I'm usually an accommodating person.

Roberts seemed to be trying to find any possible way, without regard to the rules of academia, to make money off a college, but I think he was a little mad, because he wasn't even doing that . . . and he lied all the time. The first time I discovered that he had lied to me, it was something like Hitler's "Big Lie" model, except that it was a little lie. The openness of it disarmed me. I had heard a rumor that a faculty member had been denied something that he had been promised as a condition of hire, so I went in and asked "Dr. Bob," as he called himself, about it. He denied it. And as I walked out of his office, the guy involved was there waiting to go in, and he said that Roberts had not been truthful.

Then, there was the plagiary case. Bob Stern had a student who not only plagiarized his paper by lifting an entire article, he also removed the journal in which the article had appeared from the Parsons library, so it was hard to run down his source. But it isn't difficult for an instructor to tell the difference between a published scholarly article and an undergraduate paper. Bob just went up to the University of Iowa, which was about forty miles away, and found the article. He flunked the student in the course, because there wasn't any ambiguity whatsoever about the plagiary. It was just a demonstrable fact.

Dr. Bob called Stern in and ordered him to change the kid's grade to a passing one, saying, "His father paid for his education. He's entitled to it." At that point, I realized that there was a pattern here, and it was something totally unacceptable. Several other faculty members had this realization at the same time, and there were about six of us who started working to get rid of Dr. Bob.

Then we started looking at the catalogue. It looked like Parsons had this really great faculty, but we found that whoever had written the catalogue—probably Dr. Bob—had conferred more Harvard Ph.D.s on people than Harvard itself! We would question somebody listed as having a doctorate, and he would say, with embarrassment, "No, I'm still working on my dissertation." But he was down as a Ph.D. from Harvard.

It was incredible. We investigated to find out more details, and there were lots more, believe me! I am not exaggerating a bit; I could tell you worse things. So we decided to do something about it. We consulted with people in the law school at the University of Iowa, and we talked among ourselves, and we did two things. First, we wrote a report and made a complaint to the Presbyterian Church. Well, Dr. Bob was in charge of his board, so he simply withdrew the college from the church. I don't think the church had ever given Parsons much money, or at least it didn't give enough money to matter, so Roberts disaffiliated.

Then we did the same thing with the Northwest Accrediting Association, which was still using the nineteenth century definition of "Northwest" and had jurisdiction over Iowa. We filed a complaint with them, and several years later the college was disaccredited. It is no more. The physical campus is now the site of a transcendental meditation college. In the meantime, during the years it took for the disaccrediting process to work, Roberts had started two or three other campuses. But the whole thing went down, unfortunately.

That experience taught us—Mary and me, both—that we really did believe in the values of academia, because at that time, I didn't have very good prospects for getting hired anywhere else; and once you've started

something like that, you can't stay. I left Parsons thinking that I probably wasn't going to get another academic job. We left Fairfield and went to Washington, D.C. in the summer of 1963, and I looked for federal employment. I didn't find anything that sounded plausible. Then I got two teaching offers, one in Northern Michigan and one from the University of Nevada. So it turned out that I didn't leave academia over this, but I thought I had, and Mary had approved. That's something! I'm not a brave person, generally. Being faced with something that obvious and acting on it, even though you think that it may be harmful to your career, is something I never had to do again, fortunately. When I did it, I realized I really did believe in these values. They were that important.

8

The American Political Science Association has a personnel service that you can subscribe to, and you get periodic reports on job openings around the country. I particularly wanted to go back to the West, close to the West Coast. At the time, I didn't even know that there was a University of Nevada, but when I saw the opening listed, I applied for the job. Then I applied for another one in northern Michigan and actually went for an interview there, but I took the Nevada job.

I got to Reno in August 1963, and everything worked out. The University of Nevada had advertised two positions—one for director of the Bureau of Governmental Research, and one for a position that taught political theory. As an undergraduate, I had considered myself basically a theorist, and at Berkeley you had to pass the prelim in theory, so I knew I could do that. But I was more interested in the bureau position. Well, they hired

me for the theory position, so I taught political theory in the beginning.

Morrill Hall is the oldest building on campus. A little bit northwest of it, where the rose garden is now, was a twin to it called Stewart Hall . . . right in front of the present Clark Administration Building. When I came to the university in the summer of 1963, political science was housed in what used to be the library (the present administration building), on the second floor, in offices up there. Then we moved into the basement of what had been Stewart Hall at the beginning of the fall term. Stewart had been razed; nothing was left but the basement. I still don't understand it I don't know what it was being used for, but the first time I went down into our space, just before our offices were set up, there was somebody in a hospital bed over to one side!

We settled into the remains of Stewart a little ahead of the semester. By the time the semester started, the space had been converted into decent offices for us. That's where we were at first, and then we moved to the Fleischmann Home Economics Building. Finally—and I don't remember the year—we moved into Mack Social Science, where political science is today.

The 1963-1964 academic year was the first that the poli sci department was independent. It had previously been part of a joint history/political science department. Eleanore Bushnell was chair of the department, and there were several political scientists who had been faculty in the joint department. One was Harry Chase, who taught international relations. One was Don Driggs, who taught mainly American politics. There was also Valerie Shinavar, who taught international relations, and Jim Roberts taught administration.



Stewart Hall before (above) and after (below). *"Stewart had been razed; nothing was left but the basement."* (Photographs courtesy of the University of Nevada-Reno Library, Special Collections.)





Eleanore Bushnell. (Photograph courtesy of the University of Nevada-Reno Library, Special Collections.)

We had a two-semester course in the history of Western political theory, which I taught. I taught American political theory, too, although I shared that every other year with Don Driggs. (Don had taken courses at Harvard from Louis Hartz, who was a very important theorist of his time.) So I was teaching theory courses and introductory courses. The introductory course was American national, state, and local government, so I had to find out a lot of things about Nevada quickly . . . but I never did really find out much about local government.

The year I came to Nevada was the year that John Kennedy was assassinated. In the fall of 1963, I had been at the university for just a few months. I remember precisely where I was when I heard that the president was dead. I was over in the old student union, and they had a TV set on, and the place was packed. Students, faculty, everybody was sitting around watching it. We'd heard the news earlier that he'd been shot; then we heard the news he had died. It was like Pearl Harbor. You remember precisely where you were.

Of course, we canceled classes that day. I remember thinking that, even though I wasn't a Catholic (I wasn't

even a Christian), I should go into my classroom and write on the board that the class was canceled, and then write, "Mother of God, pray for us now and at the time of our death" . . . even though this is not in my tradition. Well, I didn't do that, but I was deeply affected by Kennedy's death, and I am still moved almost to tears by the simple act of recalling it.

The casinos downtown actually closed for awhile. Not for very long, but they did, and that's the only time, I think, since we've lived in Reno that they ever closed. Everything closed down, and the next day, a memorial service was held in the Pioneer Theater Auditorium. Erling Skorpen spoke at it. Erling was a philosophy professor who was a Quaker and a pacifist, and who had been a Rhodes Scholar. He had started the Socratic Society, a student group which debated important philosophical questions. He also tried to get students involved in summer programs that would expand their horizons. He was a wonderful guy. Unfortunately, the university lost him when he was offered a better paying position elsewhere, and we wouldn't give him the modest raise he asked to stay here.

I had met Erling shortly after joining the faculty at Nevada. The university used to conduct registration in the gymnasium—every department had tables set up, and students came around and signed up for your courses. I was doing that, even though I was brand new, and Erling approached me with a petition to end nuclear testing in the atmosphere. (Kennedy did eventually do that, before he was killed.) So I signed that petition. Then I kept running into him on these things, because we agreed on a lot of issues. He was one of the great people at the university, I thought.

Erling was unfairly attacked by the newspaper during the early stages of opposition to the Vietnam War. At the beginning of the spring semester in 1965, the first teach-in against the Vietnam War took place at the university. (Maybe it was a little later.) A reporter called up Erling and asked him what he thought about whether we should be involved militarily with supporting the South Vietnamese government. The reporter said that he was contacting various people about this. The next day, there were these big headlines, "Nevada Professor Says " Erling was featured as though he had come forward and made this statement. Nothing was said about anybody else, which I thought was unfair treatment by the press. But I don't think that bothered Erling. He was a very nice man, and he was a very bright guy and a very conscientious teacher.

There were several teach-ins on campus over a period of several years. What would happen was that somebody would get together a panel of faculty and/or students who were willing to discuss the Vietnam War . . . and they didn't have to agree on everything. Then there would be a public meeting, and the panel would make their comments, and then the people in the audience would be invited to ask questions and make statements. None of the rationale for the Vietnam War made sense to me from the beginning, and I was on several of those panels over the years.

Sometimes it was students organizing these things. Sometimes it was faculty. And nobody cared much. We had a very able graduate student, Bill Lutz, who would be on panels, because he had acquainted himself with this issue and was very bright. Early in the period after Johnson intensified the Vietnamese War (he had dragged us into the quagmire, after having campaigned in the op-

posite direction), Bill made up a questionnaire about factual knowledge of Vietnam. He circulated it among the faculty, trying to find people who would be against the war, but also people who knew something about it. I had read some books on the history of that part of the world and how we had gotten into this mess, so I did fairly well on the questionnaire. That's how I got placed on one of the teach-in panels, I think. (Bill is now the head of a society that annually gives out prizes for the dumbest statement by an academic during the year, or something like that.) [laughter]

This kind of thing went on for awhile, and it wasn't protest so much as recognition that our presence in Vietnam was a really big deal, just as the Iraq war is a really big deal. Mainly, it was an educational process. People began to call them teach-ins, because they were informal meetings at which you started with people who knew something, and more often than not they would be faculty members. But you also had students, and then anybody who came could participate, and people stayed as long as they needed to talk things out. Some people who were supportive of the war would come, but, in general, teach-ins attracted people who were worried about it or opposed.

One such event was held one evening after supper in the cafeteria of the student union, because we needed a big room. It was pretty filled up. One was in a big classroom over in Scrugham Engineering Building. Hisako Shimura, who was really interested in peace and ended up working for the U.N. Secretariat in peace-keeping activities, was on the panel and gave a very thoughtful statement about the need for peace. When she was finished, some student stood up and said, "Don't you agree…?" And then he gave about a five-minute justifi-

cation for our being in Vietnam. Hisako sat there politely, and when the guy finished, she said, "No." That was all she said. [laughter]

As far as I know, the university administration didn't take a position regarding our teach-ins. We just did these things. I don't know what you have to do to schedule use of a classroom or the rooms in the student union, but nobody tried to prevent it, apparently. The whole thing was very informal. We'd talk about where we might hold this meeting, and then somebody would say, "Well, I'll go see if we can get this particular venue set up."

I don't recall that anybody ever gave us any problem, and nobody ever said, "You should be just tending to your classes and your research." There was a very open atmosphere at the university in that respect. The administration certainly didn't aid our efforts, but I don't think they made any attempt to prevent them.

9

Jim Roberts, who was the public administration person in the political science department, had founded the Bureau of Governmental Research in 1959 as an agency within the department. Primarily, it was intended as a service for state and local government officials in the state. We published a monthly newsletter, and we had a library of specialized materials on governmental matters that anybody subscribing could obtain free of charge. We would also print and send out information and do whatever consultation anybody wanted and could pay for. That was basically what the bureau did.

The bureau director's position was open in 1963, because Jim had gotten a two-year job in Pakistan . . . I think for USAID, the United States Agency for International Development. Hiram Plaas was hired to be the director in Jim's absence, and although Jim Roberts came back after two years, Hiram stayed on as director of the bureau. I think this is because of Eleanore Bushnell.

Eleanore was a very good person, but she disliked Jim for some reason, and I think that's why Jim didn't come back as director. When Jim returned to the department, he stayed on campus for a year, and then he took a job for two years as the assistant budget director for the state of Nevada. So Jim was actually on campus only one out of the first five years that I was in the department.

At some point in there, the position of assistant director of the bureau was created, and I was appointed to it. I was assistant director for a while under Hiram, and then, in 1966, when he left and went back to someplace in Tennessee, I became director of the bureau.

The position was just a regular departmental position—directors weren't paid anything extra to be directors. We had "B" contracts (academic year contracts) like everybody else, not year-round "A" contracts. We weren't paid anything extra, but we were supposed to get time off from teaching—the bureau directorship was supposed to be a half-time position. Well, I tend not to be alert about these kinds of things. I served as director for ten years, and about two-thirds of that time, I was teaching two courses every semester. (Everybody else was teaching three courses.) I finally got it knocked down to three courses a year.

Initially, the bureau had a part-time secretary, and later the position was made full time. During my tenure, the secretary was Kenna Boyer, who was very good. (The only side benefit I had as director is that I could give Kenna manuscripts. Almost everything that I published during this period was published by the bureau, but I could give her manuscripts of any kind, and she would type them, and other people in the department didn't have that opportunity.) We also had a graduate assistant who worked with the department, and that was it.

When I became director, Al Wilcox became assistant director. He taught political behavior and did some very good theoretical work. So we had two part-time faculty members and a secretary and a student assistant. Then we had a little bit of money, but very little, for anything else. We had to either do things ourselves or find independent funding for anything we did.

The first thing I did as assistant director was the research necessary for the creation of the Washoe County Community Action Association, which was set up under the 1964 Poverty Act. Federal monies were made available to local communities with the idea that you would create umbrella organizations which would coordinate services to the poor and give the poor a way of advocating various things. These were set up around the country by the Poverty Act, and they came out of studies funded by the Ford Foundation and other interested groups.

Following passage of the Poverty Act, some people in Washoe County set up the Washoe County Community Action Association. Then they needed to have some research done: "What is the extent and nature of local poverty?" So they came to the bureau for help, and I ended up being in charge of the project. We produced two reports. First we did a quick one that didn't put this in the context of theory and other knowledge about poverty, but was simply a public opinion survey of poverty in Washoe County. Then I did my reading later and produced a second volume, which is much better.

We couldn't survey the entire county, because we didn't have the resources to do that, but we surveyed in three areas that were recommended to us from various people who had been working in this area, because I didn't

have much knowledge of the local conditions at the time. At Berkeley, I had gotten some training in survey research, but no hands-on experience. I'd never actively conducted a survey or been involved with one, so I consulted the wife of psychology professor Jerry Ginsburg. She had worked in a survey research institute, I think in Michigan, before coming to Reno, and we hired her to help out.

Then I ran into Hazel Erskine, who was to become a very important person in my life. As Hazel Gaudet, she was one of the co-authors of the first national study of a presidential election in the United States, published in 1940. At Columbia University, she had been part of the first survey research organization in the United States, set up by Paul Lazarsfeld. She was living in Reno. She had married Graham Erskine, a local architect. (He did the legislative building in Carson City; he did the education building up on the hill on campus, all kinds of things. A very well-known local architect.) Hazel typed for her husband's firm—she was a world-class typist, and she did typing of specifications for him,



Hazel Erskine, 1954. (Photograph courtesy of the University of Nevada-Reno Library, Special Collections, Gus Bundy Collection.)

which is very detailed stuff—but she was bored as all get out. So then she started doing survey research for Grant Sawyer. Hazel was one of the people who got Grant Sawyer to run for governor—she was his advisor and his polling expert from a relatively early stage.

Somebody put me in touch with Hazel, and with her professional help, we put together a survey of Black Springs, which is a little community north of Reno, west of US 395, which was predominantly a black area. We also surveyed Sun Valley, which was much smaller than it is now, but was an unincorporated community for low-income people. Also, there were some low-cost apartments that were privately owned up in the northeast that somebody told us about.

We hired local people as much as possible to be our surveyors. I hired several people from the black community. Dolores Feemster, who is a wonderful person in the black community and has been a good friend ever since, started working on this survey as an interviewer. She was a real community leader. Everybody went to her, and they still do. She's retired now, but if anybody has a problem, they still go to Dee, because she knows how to deal with things.

Another person who was helpful was Elaine Walbroek. She was the director of the Nevada TB and Health Association and had learned, in that capacity, that the prevalence of TB had as much to do with poverty and living conditions as it did with medical questions. She had worked with Native Americans, helped to found the Intertribal-Council of Nevada, and later became the first director of the Equal Opportunity Board in Clark County.

The survey was funded with federal moneys channeled through the local Community Action Association



Elmer Rusco and Elaine Walbroek.

(CAA). Before the CAA could begin operations, it had to provide the feds a report based on the findings of the survey, so they did pay some attention to it. But they modified it, because what they wanted to do was set up a Head Start program in Sun Valley. The only public facility there that they could use was a community building that had been built earlier and was substandard. They asked for money from the poverty program office in Washington to refurbish the building, because they couldn't put little kiddies in an inadequate building. At first, the feds wouldn't do it, because they didn't have authorization, but the board of the CAA pushed and pushed, and they finally got some money from somewhere and started a Head Start Center in Sun Valley. They also did some things in Black Springs. Helen and Ollie Westbrook pushed and pushed for things for Black Springs, and they got some help from the Community Action Association, and also from the county.

At some point after that, I joined the board of the association. After that I couldn't do any more research for them. That would be a conflict of interest, but I figured that when we had done the earlier research, there wasn't a conflict. At that point, the board had a problem with the director of the association, an engineer who was a person who never learned from experience. The board

would tell him, "Don't do this," and he would go on doing it. Hazel and I and some other people were on a committee to revise the bylaws, mainly to get rid of him. We led that effort, and we were successful. After we got rid of him, he and his secretary were convicted of embezzling a small amount of money from the association.

The present descendant of the Washoe County Community Action Association is the Community Services Agency, headed by Cloyd Phillips. Some of Bertha Mullins's many contributions to the welfare of disadvantaged people in the community were through that organization. At some point it changed its name, and it changed its mission and everything, but it's still going.

When I got to Reno in the summer of 1963, I started trying to learn what was known about racial minorities and their situation in the state. I found out that Elaine Walbroek had been very active in Indian affairs in Nevada, so I began to pick up stuff from her, but there was virtually nothing in writing, published or unpublished, that I could find. There was a lot of stuff about Native Americans produced by the anthropologists, but very little had to do with anything contemporary. And there was nothing about the black community.

I began to put together my own information. I went to census data, anything that I could find, and produced a publication called "Minority Groups in Nevada." Eventually, the bureau published it. To a large extent, that article relied on work that Elaine Walbroek and Hazel Erskine had already done. Before she became director of the EOB in Clark County, Elaine was involved in making a survey of the Westside in Las Vegas, which is where the bulk of the black population of Clark County lived at that time. And Hazel had run the survey for Operation

Independence, which was Lubertha Johnson's group. They produced, I think, a two-volume report. So I had that, and I did some census work myself and some other stuff, and I produced this very brief piece about minority groups in Nevada.

At that time, the black population of Washoe County was a very small proportion of the whole, but it had roots going back to the beginning of the twentieth century. I started getting involved locally, but I never really got involved with the NAACP. I had a residual notion from my undergraduate days—because I'd been associated with CORE—that NAACPs were sort of Uncle Tom-ish organizations. I never used that term to anybody, of course, but I think I had this stupid idea in my head. Anyway, I was also very busy again. I was teaching two-thirds time and running the bureau, so I didn't have time to get involved with organizations in the black community. But through the community action survey, I got in touch. I made it a point of looking up black people who might be able to help us with the survey in one way or another. The Community Action Association primarily involved black people (and some whites), and the idea was to try to help, mainly, the black community, which is the way a lot of Community Action Associations were around the country.

The Community Action Association brought more black people into various kinds of activism, including Bertha Mullins, who went to work with them fairly early and who did a lot of good things. The principal impact of the association was more in the black community than among the poor white people of the county. In the 1960s there weren't many Hispanics in the county; there weren't many people from Mexico or other countries of Latin America.



Bertha Mullins and Jerry Holloway.

Neighborhood meetings used to be held in people's homes to choose delegates to the county convention of the Democratic or Republican parties, and then those conventions would choose delegates to the state ones, and the state ones to the nationals. They would put announcements in the newspaper about where these various meetings were to be held, basically on a precinct basis.

Mary and I are Democrats. The first neighborhood nominating meeting we attended was in 1964. We lived over on Southworth Drive, which is just north of the fairgrounds, an area of flat-roof houses, some of which had been renovated. When the announcements appeared in the paper, we discovered that our Democratic Party precinct meeting was right around the corner and across the street from our home. Mary and I went and knocked on the door, and there were already three people there,

Clovis Bull and his wife, and Clovis's brother, Sam Bull. After we showed up, they made a telephone call, and other relatives of the Bulls, and some people who were not, showed up. And that was the precinct meeting.

After a discussion, everybody was asked to write down three names of people to nominate to the county convention, and my name was one. While Sam was tabulating votes, somebody asked me what I thought of the Civil Rights Bill in Congress, and I gave him what I thought was an unimpeachable answer in the partisan context. (I was in favor of President Johnson's bill. It would pass in June of 1964, and this was sometime in the spring of that year.) When Sam announced the results, I had missed being elected by one vote.

On the way home it occurred to me that Sam's totals exceeded the totals that could have been cast by the small number of people present! [laughter] Then I found out that Sam lived in southwest Reno, so he wasn't supposed to be there at all! Then I found out that we shouldn't even have met in Clovis Bull's home. The precinct line ran right down the middle of that street we had crossed. [laughter] Clovis insisted that there was no particular reason why the meeting was held in his home, but it turned out he had been a buddy of Patrick McCarran and was a longtime party activist.

I never did participate much in the party process after that. From that experience, I learned that this is a very imperfect process, with lax enforcement of rules, and most people don't know about it. If you can increase people's knowledge of how you do that and encourage them to go out and participate in the political process, it might help.

When I became director of the Bureau of Governmental Research, I conceived of producing a voter's hand-

book, which would be only a few pages long, explaining Nevada's electoral laws and how people could participate. How do you register to vote? (It would change from time to time.) How long before the primary or general did you have to be registered? (You can't just walk into a polling place and be registered.) That kind of information. We put all that together and put one out and distributed it free. We could do this because, although we didn't have a budget, we could have anything printed at the university printing office, and it was not charged to us.

We did send out quite a number of those handbooks around the state, to anybody that wanted one, hoping it would be beneficial for increasing citizen participation. I doubt that it was. A lot of stuff like that doesn't work for a variety of reasons, even though it's well intended. I think I did that for three general election cycles before the university changed the rules about printing services, requiring us to pay for printing.

As director of the bureau, I did some more things on race. I did a study on voting behavior and racial minorities. I checked a few precincts where almost all the voters were Indians, and the precincts in the Westside, and was able to produce some useful data on recent elections.

Independently of my work in the bureau, I was still really interested in elections and politics and pressure groups. I did a study of voting behavior in Nevada from 1920 through 1964 that was published by the University of Nevada Press. That was not one of their more successful publications, but a few people read it. [laughter] Then I tried to do similar comparative studies of other Western states, but my lack of sophistication in gathering and using statistics was an insurmountable

problem. My aggregate data analysis was so slow that by the time I got it done, I'd have to redo the whole thing, anyway. I also was very slow at catching on to computers—if I'd gotten on to PCs earlier, I would have had less trouble.

There was a federal agency, the Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, that provided information on local governments and intergovernmental relations. It was a small agency, and the bureau got a lot of their stuff sent to our library free—very good reports on all kinds of things that affected public policy, some of them things that we're still struggling with in Washoe County. Does the county take over this? Do we set up a separate airport agency? Et cetera.

We would get reports on these things regularly, and I would read them and summarize them in the bureau's newsletter. We sent it out to public officials in the state and anybody who asked for it, and we did get people requesting copies of the publication and occasional references for something we'd published. So maybe we helped raise knowledge about public policy questions.

Later, we did another survey of poverty in portions of Reno for the Reno Redevelopment Agency when it was first founded. They funded that, but I was not good at getting money for things. I was not an organizational entrepreneur, nor was I very good at getting money, even for my own research. In fact, at that time nobody in our department was getting grants from anywhere to do anything, essentially.

I did a lot of things about race and poverty in those days. At one point in the Nixon administration, the House of Representatives in Washington actually passed a bill

that included a guaranteed income provision for poor people. It failed, and I wrote an article about that in the *Governmental Research Newsletter*, which must have upset a lot of folks. [laughter]

State Senator James Slattery ("Slats") at one time waved around a list of something like a dozen UNR faculty members whom he asserted were communists, and I was on it! Slats was an unusual kind of person and wasn't as extreme as he sounded. For example, on the very day he announced the list of supposed university communists, he also introduced a bill which resulted in putting retarded children into family-style homes at the mental health institute, which was a much more humane way of dealing with children. So he wasn't a wild-eyed conservative. According to one of the most important elected officials in Nevada, Harolds Club provided Slats with the money that enabled him to be elected, so all he really cared about were issues that Harolds Club was concerned with. But as far as I know, nobody but Slats ever accused me of being a communist.

Nobody at the university put any pressure on me because of my activities. I was aware that the issues that concerned me were not the most popular things in Nevada, which was still being called the Mississippi of the West. That was a misnomer, it wasn't fair, but Nevada was worse than most Western states, certainly worse than California in many respects. So I kept thinking, well, somebody must be after me, but nobody ever said don't do this. I never looked at my university personnel file, but I once looked at my department personnel file, expecting to find complaints that I was some kind of wild-eyed radical, which I must have looked like to a lot of folks at that time. But there weren't any.

Only one thing happened. In 1968, when Martin Luther King was killed, an ad hoc faculty committee was set up to try to act more aggressively in promoting civil rights. It was called the Human Relations Council or something similar. About the same time, anthropology professor Warren d'Azevedo put together a historical study of the presence of black and Indian students at the university. When he asked us if the bureau would publish it, our departmental advisory committee wouldn't approve it. They said it was because it didn't have anything to do directly with government. Of course, it didn't. It was data about the university, but I think they also thought this would bother some people. That was the only thing they ever wouldn't let me publish (although Warren was able to get it published another way).

The circulation of the newsletter wasn't high. One of the office-equipment companies downtown would annually distribute a big chart of all the public officials in the state, and we would take that to put together a mailing list. Everybody was on that. It had county commissioners and legislators and that sort of thing. That was the basis of our mailing list, and in addition, anybody could request a single copy or to be added to the mailing list. In fact, the most complete collection I know of the *Governmental Research Newsletter* is back at the University of Kansas in a collection that some guy made of radical groups. [laughter] They have a complete run, from the beginning till after my time.

I tried various things, and then toward the end of my tenure as director, I tried to broaden the function of the bureau. We changed the title of the newsletter from the *Governmental Research Newsletter* to *Nevada Public Affairs Review*. We thought, well, we'll broaden our thing. And I established more contact with local and state

government organizations than I had before, and I convened a conference at the university, trying to get ideas from local government people about what the bureau ought to be doing for the state. But I wasn't able to build much support for anything; so, in 1976, I just decided it was time for me to go back to teaching and doing my own research, and I resigned.

10

When I was hired at the University of Nevada, the interview was conducted over the telephone. We had been through Reno a couple of times on Highway 40 before the freeway was finished, and had eaten breakfast a couple of times in roadside restaurants, but that was all we knew about Reno. We saw the campus and the community for the first time when I showed up for the job. I thought downtown Reno was pretty tacky. That was when they had big plaster statues of showgirls on the front of the Primadonna Club. I almost couldn't forgive Grant Sawyer, when he did a commercial—it must have been for the 1966 election—which featured those statues, and he talked about "elegant" downtown Reno! [laughter]

I've never been interested in gambling, and nobody in our family has. If you gamble, the longer you gamble, the more you lose. The owners are making money because the odds favor the house, so I stayed away from

gambling. On the other hand, I read *The City of Trembling Leaves* fairly soon after arriving, and it presents a much more favorable image of Reno that has some validity. Once you get away from downtown, many parts of the city are actually quite attractive, nice, safe neighborhoods. And we liked that part of it.

Mary has always objected strongly to the politics and the social attitudes that are displayed in the legislature here, and she still thinks that those are horrible, but I got used to it. Then I got involved with the problem of trying to figure out what explains this Nevada ethos. It's a peculiar kind of conservatism. It's a conservatism that turns its back on the social ills of gambling and drinking and smoking and prostitution (and, before the feds cleaned up the gambling industry in Las Vegas, mob activity), but clamps down hard on marijuana and is politically conservative when it comes to politics and government.

When the federal government enacted the program for aid to the permanently and totally disabled, it was a grant program, meaning states didn't have to adopt it. If they did, they got some federal money. Nevada *never* adopted that. How can you justify not using federal monies and state monies to aid the permanently and totally disabled? But they did not, and I wrote letters to the editor, and other people did. And Nevada was one of the last to adopt AFDC [Aid to Families with Dependent Children].

So you have this kind of political conservatism and then irrational conservatism about forms of personal behavior. You could until very recently—and sometimes the cow counties did—send dumb kids to prison for a year or two for smoking pot. I think that's outrageous. That's like somebody drinks a cocktail, and you send

them to prison. We didn't do that even when the country had national prohibition. [laughter] Those things bothered me.

I still can't figure out exactly why Nevada is different. I tried to get a National Science Foundation grant with Hazel Erskine, whose name should have been known to anybody who was approving survey grants in Washington, to try to explore this thing by survey research. They turned us down, and I was amazed. So I wrote them and asked, "What's the reason?" The answer we got back was that Nevada is too small a state, so it doesn't matter. Nobody is interested in spending national money to find out anything about Nevada.

Of course, the situation in downtown Reno, and the state's peculiar politics, didn't affect how we lived our lives. We met like-minded people at the university soon after arriving . We got to know Jim and Betty Hulse very early. The Hulses came a year earlier than we did, but Jim grew up in Pioche and had been an undergraduate at the university. We got to be friends with them and lots of other people through the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, which we got involved with early. Some of our best friends still are folks from those early connections.

I've enjoyed living here in part because Nevada is such a wonderful place once you get out beyond the cities. And Mary was able to do much more archaeology than she would have been able to in most places. She has a master's degree, did not go on for a Ph.D., but she's very bright, and there were so few archaeologists that she's a pioneer in this state in that respect. In fact, in 2000, the Nevada Archaeological Association presented Mary with its first lifetime achievement award for archaeology. So we both had professional opportunities that we

wouldn't have had if Nevada had been better developed. I recognize that.

As for my first impressions of the university There was an odd incident in the first week. We got here in August. The fall semester began after Labor Day, and there was essentially nobody around. So when we first arrived on campus, I went in and talked to the academic vice president of the university, and he asked me if I was going to attend the meeting the next day. There was a meeting on campus of political scientists scheduled for the next day, which was sponsored by the American Political Science Association and had important national people in our discipline like Austin Ranney scheduled to attend. (But nobody from this university!) I was told nobody else from the department was going to be there, and I decided not to attend either. We were camping out at that time, hadn't found a house. But mainly I wasn't going to be the only representative of the department and try to explain to these people why nobody else was there—I had no idea! [laughter]

I found out later that the meeting had been arranged by the guy I was replacing, the guy in political theory, but he'd already left by then. [laughter] And whether that meant the other folks in the department didn't have much confidence in him, or whether it meant that they weren't operating collegially, I have no idea to this day. But that was kind of funny, I thought. That was amazing. But as soon as I began meeting people, I found they were fine people.

People were very nice to me, in the department and elsewhere. One of the faculty I met shortly after arriving was Valerie Shinavar. She was a young Japanese woman who had come to this country for her undergraduate degree elsewhere, and was working toward a Ph.D.

She had the name Shinavar because when she had come to the United States a family named Shinavar were helpful and gave her a home while she was an undergraduate. So she took that name. Valerie was a very bright and very nice person, and she went on to a brilliant career. We were friends from the beginning, and we still stay in touch. Hisako Shimura is her name now. She went on to work for the United Nations Secretariat and is now the president of the women's college in Tokyo from which she graduated.

The department was not one where we talked shop much. Don Driggs and I were most interested in the ideas of Louis Hartz, but we didn't talk about them very much in the department. But everybody was very nice to everybody else. Jim Roberts seemed to feel persecuted, almost disvalued, perhaps, from an early point, but nothing he did caused conflict within the department. In most of the years that I was in the department—I retired in 1986—we got along very well. We didn't have factional disputes. I've seen those become very dangerous, where everybody is all lined up on an issue before it even comes up, and the only goal is to win over the other. We never had that sort of situation during all that long period. We got along well, and we cooperated well, and it was a pleasant place to work.

When I was on the faculty at Parsons, you could be a student there regardless of how able you were. One professor told me he had a student once who not only copied his neighbor's paper, he copied his neighbor's name! [laughter] You had to have a C average to graduate, but you could stay a student indefinitely—you could continue as long as somebody was paying the bill. As long as somebody could make their X on a check, and it could be cashed, you could stay. [laughter] After two years

of this, when I got to Reno, I thought the students were brilliant. [laughter] I loved it. If I had just come from Berkeley, I wouldn't have, but I hadn't, so that was OK.

Faculty-administration relations seemed OK too. Charles Armstrong was president when I arrived, and I liked him. Some people didn't. I've forgotten the name of the long-term dean that we had, who I found out later was alleged to be openly anti-Semitic . . . but I didn't know that at the time. And Richard Siegel was hired in 1965, and then Leonard Weinberg maybe two years later, and Valerie, who was both a woman and a Japanese by ancestry, were hired, so I don't know But I didn't have much contact with the administration. Of course, that's the nature of academic work—you're a bunch of prima donnas off doing your own thing.

Nobody ever bothered me. I had the courses assigned to me, because that was what the position was for, and we determined in department meetings who taught courses, but it was all well established by positions and your background. Occasionally I would innovate a course, and sometimes I'd have to do it by teaching it extra, but that doesn't bother me. I didn't know much about administration, and I never wanted to be an administrator. I didn't even think of myself as an administrator at the bureau, because it was such a tiny thing.

A year or two before I arrived, Political Science and History, which had operated as a single department, separated and became autonomous. Eleanore Bushnell, our department chair, had me establish a chapter of Pi Sigma Alpha, which is our National Political Science Honor Society. I set that up and ran it for years. That was the kind of thing we were doing, because we were a new department.

Early on, I got involved with the Western Studies Center at DRI, (the Desert Research Institute). The Western Studies Center was supposed to encourage research in a number of disciplines concerned with the Western United States. One of its first projects was setting up the Oral History Program with Mary Ellen Glass as its director. Oral History moved to the university campus later and severed all ties with DRI, but initially that was how it got started. I was on the Western Studies Board from the beginning, and I was chair of the board for several years. Joy Leland was another person who was with Western Studies at that point. She had a master's degree and later got a Ph.D. from a university in San Diego, and she did things involving Native Americans.

One of the major units under Western Studies was the Archaeological Survey, which was established by a gift from Molly Magee Knudtsen, the regent. She'd been running a ranch out in Grass Valley for decades, and she was very interested in archaeology, and she gave some money to the university to establish the Archaeological Survey. Bob Stephenson was hired to be its first director. My wife Mary was hired by Bob Stephenson, because she had known him back in Lincoln. (There was a federal agency headquartered in Lincoln, and because archaeologists were few and far between, everybody knew everyone.)

Eleanore Bushnell, the first chair of the Political Science department, had started out, I believe, as a high-school teacher in Washington State. Then she had gotten her doctorate from Berkeley, which may have had something to do with my hiring. It's not inconceivable, though I didn't know her at Berkeley—she was before

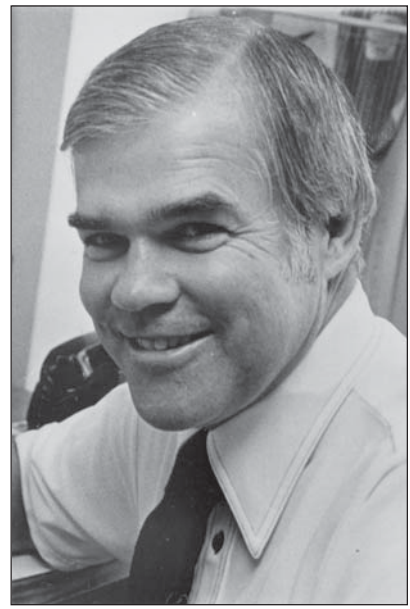
my time. Then she taught at UNLV when it was just starting as Nevada Southern. I assumed that she had come up to Reno to be chair of the department, but she might have been one of the people who had been in the joint department.

Eleanore didn't have much of a sense of humor, but she was fair and conscientious, and very bright and scholarly, and she eventually published a couple of good books. She was also tough, and she thought a department chair should make decisions. We had regular department meetings, and the faculty discussed all the important things, but Eleanore was a strong-minded administrator within that context. She also worked very hard. When I was producing the poverty report, I would take drafts to her and ask her to look at them, and although she didn't edit them in detail, she would look at them. She approved of what I was doing.

Eleanore didn't like Hiram Plaas, which is probably one reason why he didn't last longer as director of the bureau. Some of it may have had to do with the fact that Hiram was Mormon and Eleanore apparently didn't care for Mormons. Hiram also had some personal behavior characteristics that bothered even me. (I'd rather not describe them.) Whatever the reasons, she definitely did not like Hiram; and she did not like Jim Roberts, either, although Jim is a very bright and sophisticated person. Occasionally, she would decide she didn't like somebody, and that could be a problem for them. [laughter]

Eleanore served as chair for a number of years, and then she had some kind of operation, and the blood transfusion gave her a bad case of hepatitis. She was very ill for a while, so she had to quit as head. Don Driggs became chair. He was really interested in doing the job, but most of us weren't. Don had ambitions to be an aca-

demic administrator at a high level, and for a while he was gone from campus. He was an assistant president in one of the state colleges in California, and he took a semester or a year to go back to a school somewhere in the Middle West, where you got training in academic administration. Don was a good chair. He worked hard at it, he was fair, he consulted with everybody.



Don Driggs, 1972. (Photograph courtesy of the University of Nevada-Reno Library, Special Collections.)

The biggest difference between Don and Eleanore was that Don was much more interested in getting consensual decisions by the department, and he would carry them out rather than make decisions on his own. Eleanore was strong-minded and thought she knew what was right, and she liked to make decisions. We didn't make very many decisions of any consequence, of course, but when we did, Don wanted consensual decisions.

In the early days, I don't think the political science department had a particular emphasis. We just wanted to be a good, well-rounded department, and we tried to have the major traditional fields. We had comparative government, international relations, administration, theory, and American government. I think that

was basically the way things were organized, and we tried to get good people in all those areas.

I don't remember much concern for how popular particular courses, or even particular professors, were with students. We instituted student evaluations sometime during this period, and made it part of our regular system and part of our personnel evaluation system. So we cared about input from the students, but I don't think we were particularly . . . we didn't have any stars that could attract large classes or anything like that.

Jim Roberts was pretty popular with students, and he was probably a very good teacher, but I can't remember that the department ever thought about these things systematically. I didn't, and I don't think anybody else did. At that time, the only thing the department was involved in that wasn't just straight teaching was the bureau, and that was due to Jim Roberts, initially. (It was continued and expanded until finally it got transformed into the Alan Bible Institute and taken out of the department.)

Gradually, people in the department developed more research interests. Al Wilcox was the first, I think, to become seriously interested in research. He got interested in how you define public opinion and measure it, and he was invited to international conferences to give papers. Leonard Weinberg became an expert on Italian politics, and he was a member of a small group of scholars in this country who knew about Italian politics. Then he began exploring terrorism, and he is well-recognized for his scholarship on this subject, far beyond the university. Those two were the first ones to really put much emphasis on research. And Richard Siegel became internationally known for his research on human rights.

At that time, research and publications were not as important as they are today in promotion and tenure decisions. Of course, we had a departmental personnel committee, and every year people would submit what they had done during the year for evaluation. You'd submit the teaching evaluations from the students, and the committee would look at them. In my recollection, a member of the department could do very little (if any) research and scholarly publication, but still get promoted and tenured if you were a good, conscientious teacher.

I had published a number of things through the bureau, like *Minority Groups in Nevada*. On one—*Voices of Black Nevada*—Mary Ellen Glass cooperated with me, and we interviewed a number of black leaders in Reno and a few from southern Nevada. I was doing things like that, and they were "published" through the bureau, but they weren't offset-printed things, and they didn't go through peer review. I thought they were scholarly publications, but I found out later that a lot of people on the personnel committee in the past had not considered them to be so. [laughter] When I came up for promotion to full professor, I had written a book—one of the least read books ever published in Nevada, apparently—about black history in the state. (It had been accepted for publication, but was not yet in print.) But other than that, the department wasn't interested in anything I had written. It was more interested in teaching, it would be correct to say, than publication.

Even though we weren't really research oriented, I don't remember during my time (up to 1986) that we had any real problem getting promotion or tenure once the department committee made its decision, and the department was relatively lenient in approving these

things. We weren't insisting on high scholarly standards, but I don't recall that we ran into any significant trouble with the university once we got past our department on any personnel decisions. But I don't know These were people I worked with, and many of them are friends, but I didn't pay much attention to this sort of thing.

Hazel Erskine was one of the leading people in the country on survey research. She had been in on the beginning of it, and in her home office, in a big bank of cabinets, she kept a card file, organized by subject, of all the detailed information she could find from national surveys. She ran a quarterly column in the *Public Opinion Journal*, the principal academic journal for people involved in survey research, in which she would review the history of national public opinion surveying about particular topics, based upon this archive that she had in her office at home.

Hazel planned to put in her will that her archive would go to Columbia University, where she had begun this thing with Paul Lazarsfeld's outfit. But Columbia wasn't interested. She asked me if the bureau would take it, and I said yes, not thinking about what the hell we would do with it. So she put in her will to donate it to the bureau. Hazel died in the summer of 1976. (That was a terrible loss. I loved her dearly.) So we inherited this unique collection—nobody else in the country had created an archive of answers in national surveys by particular topics. The Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress had found out about it. They asked to copy it for their purposes, so I had it copied in Carson City on microfilm and sent it to them.

I got a little money from somewhere to hire a part-time graduate assistant, and we had that archive up in a

room in the library for awhile, and tried to keep it up. But I'm not an academic entrepreneur at all, and I couldn't get the resources to maintain it, so we eventually had to sort of retire it. When we lost funding from the university, the archive went into storage at Stead, just sitting in that big building with no windows.

The university had no meaningful records management plan for any records, even its own, and it still doesn't. Once I went out to Stead to pick up some stuff, and I found several boxes of records sitting near ours. I had to look in the boxes to see what they were, because they weren't labeled—just cardboard boxes. They had to do with the founding of the medical school. Out of one box fell a whole bunch of blades for surgical knives. Boxes of records were just sitting around in piles all over the place, and I thought, "This is not a All this is crap. Somebody's going to come in some day and take all this crap out to the dump, Hazel's archive along with it!" [laughter] So I went to the vice-president about starting a records management plan, and we had a nice talk, and he was quite sympathetic, and absolutely nothing happened.

We had a master's program in political science from the beginning. Then we decided to set up a Ph.D. program, but I can't remember the timing of it. We ran it for several years, and we had several people who got Ph.D.'s. During that time, I supervised twice as many Ph.D. candidates who finished their dissertations as C. Wright Mills had in his entire career. [laughter] Hazel knew C. Wright Mills when she was at Columbia, and she said he did research unceasingly, and he hated all students, even graduate students. He supervised one disser-

tation. I supervised two when we had our program running, so I supervised twice as many. [laughter]

One of my Ph.D.'s was Tim Haller, who ended up as the dean of liberal arts at the Western Nevada Community College in Carson City. The other was Fawn Mortara, who was a really bright person, and she ended up teaching down there. And one young man got a job at Arizona State at Tempe. There were others. I don't think we were worried about the quality of people we were turning out, but after a few years we suspended the program in response to a dismal national job market for Ph.D.'s in political science. The program was reinstated some time in the 1990s.

In its first iteration, our Ph.D. program may not have been among the better ones in the West, but even Berkeley sometimes turns out culls. Effie Mona Mack, who was on the social science faculty at Reno High School long before my time, had her Ph.D. from Berkeley, if I remember correctly, so she was ostensibly well educated. She published a vast number of things about Nevada history, but I learned early on that you shouldn't use anything she wrote without checking it, and every time I checked, she was wrong. Some examples:

At some point the Nevada legislature, without changing the constitution, had allocated only one senator to each county. I wondered, "When did this happen?" So I looked it up in Effie Mona Mack's history of Nevada, and she said it had happened in 1927. Then I checked the records and discovered that the first election reflecting the change was the election of 1916!

She had published a book about Mark Twain in Nevada. She reported that he left the territory after getting drunk one night and leaving a story on the composing table that was not supposed to be printed. When it

got printed the next day, Twain had to go. She didn't mention the subject of this story. What outraged people was that it was about race. Twain had written that the ladies of Carson City had raised money for the sanitary fund, but had sent it to a miscegenation society in the East. (A miscegenation society at that time meant a group promoting inter-racial marriage, which was extremely unpopular.) Well, Effie Mona Mack wrote a whole book about Twain and his leaving Nevada without mentioning what the substance of the article was that led to his departure.

There's still confusion among scholars about how many Indians were in Nevada in territorial days and in the first couple of decades of statehood. (The numbers are actually in the Census Bureau reports, but you have to look a little bit to find them.) I read something of Effie Mona Mack's, and she wrote that there were 5,000 Indians in Nevada in territorial days. She did give a citation to that, which was a Bureau of Indian Affairs report, so I looked it up, and that was just the number for Northern Paiutes! In 1870, the standard census table for Nevada listed only twenty-three Indians, because they were not yet counting "Indians not taxed." But they had another table a little further back that gave the "true population" of every state, which included Indians, and that was 16,000 plus for Nevada. So I figured, extrapolating from that, that in territorial times there were at least 20,000 Indians in what became Nevada.

And another thing: she wrote that there was direct evidence that the Southern Pacific machine in Nevada had paid voters X number of dollars per vote in some election. She cited a newspaper article as her source, so I looked that up. It turned out to be an interview with a guy in 1932 or thereabouts, and he didn't

give that specific figure in the interview. Even if he had, the story was about an election that had taken place fifty years before! After that, I never read her again or looked up things in any of her work.

11

When I arrived at the University of Nevada in 1963, the number of minority students on campus was quite small. The first black student to graduate from the university had graduated in about 1931 or 1932; and the first *female* black graduate was Stella Parsons, who graduated, I think, in 1953. When she retired, she set up a scholarship program in her name. (By that time, her last name was Mason.) I contributed to the scholarship fund and went to the reception that they had. So there had been very few black graduates before I arrived, and very few Native Americans.

Things didn't begin to change until the late 1960s or early 1970s, when a coach who was hired from California started bringing in black basketball players. The students immediately ran into trouble. They couldn't find housing; people wouldn't rent them a place to stay, simply because of their skin. (The dorms were integrated at that time, but if they were looking for places outside,

they had real difficulty.) Pat Fladager became an advisor to the black students and sort of mothered them.

I have no interest in athletics. I don't normally admit that, because it's un-American, but I have no interest in athletics. [laughter] I've been to one college football game in my life, and it was at KU. Actually, two—there was also one at Idaho. I just never was interested, so all I really know about what happened with the basketball team is what Pat told me and a few other things that I picked up at the time. I was not involved very much with the black students, although people would come by, occasionally, for some advice. One was a very promising young black male student, who was a delegate to the 1968 national Democratic Convention, but he died very young. Joe Crowley also went to the convention and wrote a witty account of it, which the bureau published. I'm not sure why I didn't have much contact with black students. Occasionally, some would attend my classes, but I didn't do anything specifically directed to their interests. Joe Crowley did. Joe ran a special course on African-American politics or civil rights politics during those years when he was teaching in the department.

By the 1970s, the federal government was putting quite a bit of pressure on higher education to hire blacks and Hispanics, but Nevada was responding slowly, as always. There were very few minority faculty on campus. One was Hisako Shimura (Valerie Shinavar), who was Japanese. I don't know how she happened to get hired at that time, because she didn't have her doctorate. She was quite bright and able, but how she happened to get hired, I don't know, given the barriers she had to clear.

When the Kent State killings occurred, and we had demonstrations on campus, Ben Hazzard was here in his first year, I think, as a member of the art faculty.

Ben may have been the first black faculty member hired by the university. He was one of the people that was in various meetings with faculty and students to try to figure out how to respond to the Kent State killings. Ben had trouble finding a place to live, because he was colored. He'd go to places that were advertised, and they'd tell him, "No, we just rented," or, "Sold it." That sort of thing. He left after a year or two. Sometime later, he became director of the Oakland Art Museum, which is a great museum. Ben was a very talented guy.

When Martin Luther King was killed in the spring of 1968, a meeting of faculty members was called to try to figure out a response to this terrible event. We sat around an unused classroom one afternoon and formed a group called the Human Relations Council. Jim Richardson and Warren D'Azevedo and I were there, and there were about five of us who were sort of the steering committee for that. We drafted a request to Edd Miller, who was the president then, asking for ethnic studies programs, the hiring of minority students, and so forth and so on. We pressed for things, and Edd Miller did appoint an Ethnic Studies Board and some other group concerned with race relations. The university's response may have had something to do with the faculty request for action, or it may have been because Edd had experience in getting more ethnic diversity into a college before he came here. He may have just done it on his own. Anyway, those things happened at about the same time, but then things moved very slowly.

There were black students pushing for change too, and some of them were very pushy. Jesse Sattwhite was a great, big, strong guy, and he was always issuing explicit or implicit threats of violence. He never committed any violence that I know of, but he was that kind of

guy. You would think, given the kinds of things I deal with, that I must be attracted to conflict, but I don't *like* it. I'm a coward, and I just don't like conflict, and I didn't want any part of it, and I didn't have much to do with the black students.

Of course, similar confrontations were occurring throughout the nation in the period after passage of the Civil Rights Bill, when things did not immediately improve for many black people. In fact, in the late 1960s employment picked up nationally; and incomes picked up in the white community in the 1970s, but in the black community, they began to go down. There occurred a long, complex radicalization of part of the black community, beginning with Black Power and Malcolm X.

Anyway, some things began to happen on campus, but it was slow going. The Ethnic Studies Board and this informal Human Relations Council asked Edd to create a special faculty position for a black person, somebody who would increase racial diversity in the university and would also promote racial equality and civil rights on campus. Eventually, Professor Michael Coray was hired. But Mike was supposed to be just a regular faculty member in the history department and also fulfill this other responsibility. He was to run ethnic studies programs, and it was hoped that he would attract more minority faculty.

Barbara Thornton was an early graduate student in our department, and a good one. She later went to the University of Utah and got a doctorate in another discipline, returned to the University of Nevada, and has been a faculty member here for some time. Barbara and I and a third person were appointed by Joe Crowley to do a study of how to improve conditions so we would get more minority faculty. We spent about a semester—off and on,



Barbara Thornton, c. 1989. (Photograph courtesy of the University of Nevada-Reno Library, Special Collections.)

when we had time—working on this. We interviewed everybody. We interviewed key administrators and that sort of thing, and we submitted a report.

Harry Wolf was head of Affirmative Action at the university. Harry had been an administrator for what became the Truckee Meadows Community College when it was first started, and he did not seem to me to be a very able person. He didn't have any apparent interest in affirmative action or anything like that, and he didn't push things at all. So we tried to figure out ways to motivate Harry. We got some complaints, which we tried to deal with in various ways, and we put out a report about various positive things that could be done—staying away from talking about quotas or anything, but identifying ways you could attract more minority faculty members. I thought it was a very good report, but, again, nothing happened . . . for what reason, I don't know.

In 1970, Dr. Harry Edwards from Berkeley came to our campus to address the students, but I wasn't there to hear him, partly because at that time we lived out in Floriston. (We lived in Floriston, just across the state line in California, for ten years, because it was a beautiful place to live. I had checked with Neil Humphrey to find out if there was any rule against faculty members living out of state, and he said no.)

I didn't go to hear Harry Edwards speak, but I read about what happened afterwards. He apparently gave a pretty inflammatory speech, one in which he called President Miller a "cracker sitting up there in the president's office" and a few other things. That was not one of the great events. [laughter] Edwards was quite radical and unfair. Edd Miller was not doing as much, perhaps, as he might, but he wasn't by any means a racist. I think Edwards's speech was one of the things that led to the Black Students Organization taking over the student union in 1971.

In 1971, a group of black students, and apparently a number of non-students, occupied the student union. You'd think, with my interest in issues of race, that I would have been at the center of this, but I wasn't. Again, this was partly because I was very busy; and partly because I don't like controversy. Also, one of my characteristics is something I think of as a form of shyness, but it may be something else. It's ameliorated over the years, but for years and years, when I would go into a new group of people, most of whom I didn't know, I couldn't say anything for a meeting or two, for a considerable period of time. I don't know why. I had to take that long to get acclimated. I think of it as maybe a kind of shyness.

I also have another characteristic, and that is that when things arise quickly, I can't participate right away. This, too, ameliorated somewhat over the years . . . but I wouldn't even go to such events then, because I knew that although I could observe, I couldn't participate right away. And the next thing that's important—I still have this tendency—I'm able to perceive, I think, human relations situations in emotional as well as rational, intellectual terms, but there's a gap between the event and my comprehension of it. When we're having a discussion of some kind, and it gets heated, I can't figure out at the time what's going on. Later I understand, "Yes, well, this is what's happening in emotional terms." I think I'm fairly good at that. That's what I call sensitivity, and I think I'm a sensitive person, but there's this delay. That means that in a fast breaking situation or in a negotiating situation, I am the last person who should be there. So I generally tried to stay away from this sort of thing.

Also, I did a *lot* of things all the time, and I probably was neglecting my teenage kids during these years. I was working hard at teaching, teaching a little more than I was required to many of these years, and doing all these other things. I was just very busy. Anyway, I didn't go over to the student union, and I didn't try to help out. I didn't know *how* to help out, but I thought Edd Miller handled that situation very well and very courageously.

Sometime before that, Edd had called a meeting in the old main meeting room in the Jot Travis Student Union. It was an opportunity for faculty and students to sit around big tables and discuss some of these issues. Edd was there just as another person, and people were saying all sorts of hostile things to him from time to time, and he was just treating this in a very mature and effec-

tive way. All kinds of faculty and students were there, including the black students and a few Native American students. It was a sort of open discussion of all these serious problems.

As for the 1970 Governor's Day incident Well, it was a mistake to have the governor appear regularly at the university only once a year, which was ROTC Day. This happened, in 1970, to be the day after the Kent State killings. But I didn't attend the event or participate in the demonstration that interrupted it. I never went to any of those things, and only heard about them afterwards. Paul Adamian, a tenured English professor, was one of the participants in the demonstration. Paul was eventually fired by the regents, but they were persuaded



Part of the Governor's Day demonstration, May 5, 1970. (Photograph courtesy of the University of Nevada-Reno Library, Special Collections.)

to let the university at least look at the case before they did anything.

I was chair of the Ethnic Studies Board at that time. Somebody—I think maybe it was Bob Harvey—asked me if I would agree to chair the UNR faculty committee that investigated the Adamian case. I said I wasn't too happy about that, but I would if they needed me to; and then I wasn't asked to be on the committee at all. Paul was, for our campus, a very radical, inflammatory guy in some of these public meetings. He would talk about "white niggers," meaning faculty members! [laughter] He was very radical in a not helpful way, and the regents eventually fired him against the recommendations of the committee and President Miller.

Following the killing of student protestors by National Guardsmen at Kent State University, there were a number of impromptu gatherings of our students. There was an informal, unofficial "student center" across Virginia Street from the university in a house they called the Hobbit Hole. Some of the meetings were held there, and some of them were held in the Center for Religion and Life, and I went to a couple of those. Then there were meetings in a big meeting room in the old student union. At times youngish people would stand and make all kinds of radical statements, and as far as I could figure out, they weren't from our campus at all. I don't know who they were or where they were from, but they would be standing up haranguing people . . . they *were* "outside agitators," but I don't think they had much impact, because everybody recognized that they'd never seen these people before. [laughter]

A poor people's march took place in Reno in the spring of 1968 before Martin Luther King was killed. His Southern Christian Leadership Conference organized such marches around the country to focus attention on poverty, and we had one in Reno. There were several hundred people in the march. I was one, and I was in the group of seven or eight people that went to seek permission from the City of Reno for the march, because they would have to close downtown streets for it. Joe Lattimore was the city manager at that time. We were sitting in a room with him somewhere in city hall, trying to explain what this was about. Of course, it was being sponsored by Martin Luther King's organization, which is nonviolent, and it was *clearly* going to be a nonviolent event. But Joe Lattimore's hands were actually shaking! He was scared to death of this thing—which puzzled me, because I saw the march as a moderate response to what was going on. It wasn't anything. There were some radical things going on at that time in the community, like some of the things at the university, but that march was a very moderate thing.

When we marched, I was not in the front line. There were a number of local black people marching. We came down Sierra and then west over to Virginia and then maybe a couple blocks down Virginia, and there were crowds lining the sidewalks, and I saw more black faces on that walk than I've ever seen at any one time in Reno before or since. It did attract people from the black community.

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Back in the days when discrimination was widespread in Nevada against blacks, it often extended to Indians. There used to be signs in windows that read, "No Blacks or Indians Allowed." And one that Alice Smith told me she had seen in a store window in downtown Reno: "No Blacks, Indians, or Dogs." It's been a long time since I read *An American Dilemma*, but as I recall, it's almost entirely about blacks. There must be some mentions here and there of other non-white groups, but you get the impression that the one group that's been discriminated against in a major way is blacks. And that is not true. So I started studying groups other than blacks, including Indians, because I knew that the basic problem is white racism, not misperception of the actual characteristics of these various groups.

Also, early on after moving to Nevada, I developed an interest in Indians for two other reasons. One was that Mary was an anthropologist, and anthropology is the

one discipline in this country that has made extensive studies of Native Americans. Another reason why I got involved with Indians, however, was related to the survey we did for the Washoe County Community Action Association. Through that I met Elaine Walbroek, and Elaine introduced me to some very important people in the Native American community.

Elaine had graduated from Berkeley, and she was a very bright person. Then she worked for the International Red Cross in Geneva for years. She came to Nevada as the director of the TB and Health Association in the state. She was based in Reno, but she quickly got to know folks around the state. She was indefatigable. [laughter] I work hard, but nobody could match Elaine for hard work. And she was interested in all kinds of things. For example, before we knew her, she started some kind of home health service in northeastern Nevada, which was mainly for Indians. She found that they had a greater need than other folks.

There was a multi-agency effort to get rid of tuberculosis on the Fort McDermitt Indian Reservation in the 1960s, and Elaine led in that, and she learned early on that poverty was a major factor in maintaining the pools of the organism that causes tuberculosis. They had by then developed medicines that could defeat TB, but you had to get people to take them; that was difficult. But also, if you could fight poverty, you could fight the disease. So she got involved in efforts to improve things at Fort McDermitt.

Through her work, Elaine met John and Effie Dressler. John Dressler was a Washoe Indian and one of the finest people I've ever known. He led a number of efforts throughout the state, beginning probably in the late 1950s and certainly by the 1960s, to improve life for

"our Indian people of Nevada," as he put it. He was the chair of the Washoe Tribe for years and years—a very able and very hard-working, conscientious guy. John was an ironworker, but his employer would give him unpaid leave to do these kinds of things.

John went around the state trying to organize an inter-tribal council to represent the Indian people. I think the first meeting of that was 1963. John led that effort and became chair of the ITC, and most of the reservations and tribes in the state joined. The headquarters for the ITC in the first years were in a house which sat west across the street from Washoe Medical Center. I later got to be a member of the state board of the TB and Health Association, and we'd have our meetings there, and for years there was a sign on the door that said, "Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada," long after ITC had moved out.

Elaine got to know the Dresslers personally and liked them very much and introduced us to them, and we thought they were really great people. She was very concerned about helping John organize the Indian people in the state so that they would get more clout, more influence, get listened to more often. Elaine probably wrote the grant that enabled John Dressler to head up a statewide effort to interview people on the various Indian reservations and discover what they thought their needs were, what they wanted. And Mary was hired to help with that. Maybe this was the first job she had in Nevada. I ran into Elaine when we were trying to figure out how to do the poverty study, and I learned from her where there were places that you could go to study these problems. (We liked Elaine very much, and we recognized her ability, and we became fast friends and remained fast friends till she died of cancer some years ago.)

After Elaine left Reno, she went down to be the first director of the Economic Opportunity Board in Clark County, where she was soon displaced by a black person, because the agency operated mostly on the Westside, and they wanted one of their own people. Then she went over to Berkeley and founded a public health program in the School of Public Health there, which encouraged Indians to come and get master's degrees in public health. And she ran that for several years and extended it to several other universities around the country before she ran into her fatal illness.

So, from soon after my arrival, Elaine introduced me and Mary to Native American people in Nevada. Having a wife who was an anthropologist and knew about Indians, combined with the ties we got through Elaine Walbroek, accounted for some of my interest in Indian issues at the time.

The immediate impetus for establishing the ACLU of Nevada was Jack Forbes's interest in helping the traditional Western Shoshones get their point of view adopted. Jack wrote an article on their legal rights, which was published in the state bar journal, arguing that the Western Shoshones had a good legal case. He got me involved in that activity, and I attended a number of meetings of the ITC while it was being organized, because Jack would call me up and say, "Well, they're having this meeting in Winnemucca. Would you go?" And I would go along with him.

I met some wonderful people. Glen Holley was one of the great people that I met. He was a Western Shoshone leader at Battle Mountain. I attended a number of traditionalist meetings of the Western Shoshones during these years, and I began to do legal research. I found out that, in fact, the process by which the Indian Claims Com-

mission concluded that Native Americans in the state had lost their lands, was so vague as to be essentially meaningless.

In the case of both the Western Shoshones and the Northern Paiutes, the two largest groups in the state—of course, their territory also overlapped other states—the claims commission had to conclude the date on which they lost ownership of their lands. And in both cases, they just picked a date out of the air, and the lawyers on both sides stipulated to that. They agreed to it by what's called "stipulation." And so if you read the decision, you find that for the Western Shoshone, it was July 1, 1871. They just picked a date. Nothing at all had happened on that date. [laughter]

The attorneys for the Indians in the claims cases didn't get paid unless there was an award to the tribes, and then they got a percentage of that. But some Western Shoshones, traditionalists, didn't want compensation; they wanted it acknowledged that they still own the land. In the Ruby Valley Treaty, the Indians had agreed to establishment of settlements, building of railroads, mining, and so forth. And the traditionalists were perfectly willing to accept that. Anything that had passed into private hands through those means, they were willing to accept. But that still left most of central Nevada [laughter] as supposedly federal lands, and they thought it was their land. They didn't want to be paid for it.

So the traditionalists began to organize, to assert their claims. They got some attorneys to work with them, and they started with the Sacred Lands Foundation. Then they won a crucial election in the Temoke Bands organization, which is an odd combination of several small colonies in northeastern Nevada. And then they eventually created the Western Shoshone National Council.

Then the feds made a mistake. The Dann sisters are Western Shoshones who live south of Beowawe and ranch there. They are strong traditionalists, and they maintain they own all the land around. Unfortunately, they run hundreds of horses and lots of cattle out there; they overgraze the land. So the BLM tried to collect grazing fees from them, and when they refused to pay, sued them. That gave the Western Shoshone traditionalists a way to get into court.

You can't sue the federal government without its consent, but the feds had sued first. That case dragged out for years. The only court that actually considered the factual claims of the traditional Western Shoshones was the Ninth Circuit, and at one point they considered all the federal government's arguments for when the Western Shoshone land had become U.S. public property and rejected all of them. Then they sent the case back to Judge Bruce Thompson in Nevada for determination. Ultimately, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the process set in motion by the Indian Claims Commission had settled the question, because they had made an award. (It entitled the Shoshones to X number of dollars in compensation, which was put into a special fund as payment to the Indians) However, the Indian Claims Commission never actually considered the factual arguments put forward by the Western Shoshones.

The money is still sitting there gathering interest. [laughter] But no Western Shoshones have gotten any, because so far the traditionalists have been able to block any kind of payment. The technicality was that once the claims commission made an award, this money was set up in some kind of special federal account. After that, you had eighteen months to develop a tribal roll and to determine how much of the money should go to indi-

vidual payments and how much to tribal organization . . . that sort of thing. But mainly, develop the tribal roll. If you didn't develop the tribal roll by that deadline, then there had to be an act of Congress before they could be paid. Indian politics couldn't achieve consensus on the tribal roll issue, so it just petered out.

Well, I was a scholar. I didn't distort anything at all. I was on the traditionalist Shoshone side, and I tried to help them get some resolution of this issue. I went to Western Shoshone National Council meetings. At one point I was asked by Jerry Millett, then the president of the council, if I'd come in and help them with a constitution, but they never got around to that. Some of my written reports were used to get grants for the Western Shoshone Council's efforts. So I was an advocate in that respect for them for years and years.

I was present at the founding meeting of the Nevada chapter of the ACLU, but the guy that provided the impetus to found it was Jack Forbes, who was teaching in the history department and who was very interested in Native American issues. He was the director of the Western Studies Board when I was on it, and he was also a Unitarian Universalist, so Mary and I knew him and his family, and we were friends. Jack started the ACLU.

Jack had gotten involved with the traditional Western Shoshones, who insisted that they still owned the land they used to occupy. The Ruby Valley Treaty identified their lands specifically, and other evidence said that this was not a land accession treaty at all. That battle went on for years, and I got involved in it. Their basic view had logical merit, and I wrote some stuff on that and further increased my reputation as a radical, too. [laughter]



Jack Forbes, 1964. (Photograph courtesy of the University of Nevada-Reno Library, Special Collections.)

A. L. Wirin was a cooperating attorney with the ACLU in southern California and a really staunch advocate of civil liberties, and Jack brought him to the state and took him out to central Nevada to meet Western Shoshones. They were trying to find a way of getting their issue into court. That was the immediate impetus, as I remember it, for the formation of the ACLU. Also, Jack had been involved in issues of housing discrimination against blacks, and he felt these problems were best addressed by getting a state ACLU organized. So Jack called a meeting in his home one night.

There had previously been individuals in the state who had had connections with the ACLU or were advocating civil liberties. One was Anne Martin, of course, who is very well known. She was on the national advisory board of the ACLU for about fifteen years, from fairly early in the 1920s. Then there was Martin Scanlan, who was a Reno attorney and a socialist. He became what they called a "correspondent" with the national ACLU. In other words, he sent newspaper articles about civil liberties-related issues and other information to the national office, and occasionally they would ask him for

information about Nevada. Scanlan ran for the legislature once, and he was the law partner of E. E. Roberts, who was mayor of Reno in the 1920s. So he had been not an unimportant person in the community, in spite of being a socialist.

And when I first came to Reno, Joe Robertson, who was a professor in range science at the Fleischmann Ag College, operated in the same capacity. I think he was known as a correspondent with the national office. Early in the Grant Sawyer administration, the legislature passed some minor bill that restricted civil liberties, and Joe found out about it and wrote Grant a very nice, reasoned letter, asking him to veto this on civil liberties grounds. I believe Sawyer did. So there were individuals before us who'd had some involvement with the ACLU, but there was no organization in this state before we set one up beginning in 1966.



Joe Robertson, c. 1953. (Photograph courtesy of the University of Nevada-Reno Library, Special Collections.)

After that there were some local organizational meetings to kind of set up a structure, and Jack either wrote or got a bylaws draft, which had provisions for creating the ACLU in Nevada as a northern Nevada group, because at that time we were the only one there was. But then there were some provisions for conversion if

another group arose into a true statewide organization. And about the same time, an organization was forming in Clark County. We had a series of meetings with them in Tonopah, because it was roughly equal driving distance between Las Vegas and Reno, to work out the details of the first bylaws of the statewide ACLU. I rode back from Tonopah one day sitting on a chair in the back of a van, because we were car-pooling.

We were recognized by the national office as an affiliate, which is the term for a local group in the organization, in 1967. Initially, we had two groups—chapters in the north and the south. Jack was the state president in the beginning. Then he left. (There was a federal research outfit in Berkeley, and he went over there for several years, and then he started the Native American Studies Program at the University of California at Davis.) I believe that Rick Chiarito, a UNR librarian and a very nice guy, was the northern chapter chair for the first three years.

When Jack Forbes left to go over to the Bay Area, I was elected state president. I served in that role for ten years, and they would have liked me to stay on longer, but I was beginning to wear out. After resigning as state president, I spent several years doing the minutes for state board meetings and for northern chapter meetings. I had learned how to take really good minutes from Hazel Erskine, who was the first person to take minutes at our board meetings. I did that and a few things. I was one of the incorporators of the ACLU foundation, which can receive 501 (C3) gifts, tax-deductible gifts. My job was organizational, primarily.

I had sort of gotten pulled into chairing the ACLU after Jack Forbes left the campus to go work in a research

outfit in Berkeley. Hazel Erskine was our unofficial, totally unpaid executive director, long before we were big enough to have one, and she did much of the organizational work in helping us keep together. I couldn't imagine leaving Hazel to do this alone, but I was kind of reluctant to accept the chair, in part because I was busy, and in part because I had never had any leadership position in any organization. But I was conscientious, and I was definitely committed to civil liberties, so I took the chair and stayed with it for many years.

Initially, the membership was quite small. For a couple years into the creation of the state organization, we had something like a hundred members. Hazel would type up a membership list from time to time and mimeograph it, send it around to the leadership. Members actually joined the national ACLU, and they returned some of the money to the affiliates. That was our source of income.

Our budget was very small. At first, all we needed money for was to hold regular meetings, and usually we paid for that ourselves. I can't remember how many times a year we met.

The north and south chapters of the state ACLU met in Tonopah, because it was roughly halfway between Las Vegas and Reno. From both directions a carload would go, and they'd stay at the Mizpah Hotel and hold the meetings there. Later we flew back and forth, alternating north and south. The airline fares used to be quite low. You could get roundtrip to Reno and Las Vegas for something like sixty-nine dollars at one time. Those expenses would be paid out of the treasury, and we would pay Hazel's expenses in putting out minutes and that sort of thing.

Hazel did wonderful minutes. When we had a state board meeting, as the president I would get maybe an

eight-page account of what had gone on at the meeting. Some of the meetings could last half a day. I would get a practically verbatim account of that, with everything starred: "Such-and-so said he or she would do this. You said you would do this." I would go over that and make any alterations I wanted, and then she would produce a shorter version and send it out to the board members. She was very able and very thorough.

We were trying to figure out how to grow. The national ACLU at one point had what they called a Crisis Areas program. They had a fund to make grants to affiliates to help them get executive directors, and we applied for that. We got a grant, and our first executive director was a part-time worker down in Las Vegas. She was very good, very hard working. She was developing things very well down there, but then she got divorced and had to get a better paying job so that she could support her kids, and we lost her. We had a replacement for awhile, who didn't work out to be nearly as effective.

We put out a newsletter to our members, periodically, several times a year, and sometimes I had to be the editor of it, because we didn't find anybody else. Then we got a board member from Las Vegas, who had always wanted to edit something. He took it over, and he wanted to call it the *Indicator* for some reason. He edited this for several years. I was doing everything else that needed doing that Hazel couldn't do, and I turned out to be fairly good at that kind of thing, because I'm systematic and focused and conscientious.

We were so overwhelmed with organizational responsibilities, and with cases that were brought to us, that there was not time to develop an active agenda of our own. We didn't have any staff attorneys, and at first we didn't have very many cooperating attorneys—pri-

vate attorneys willing to volunteer for ACLU cases. Then at some point while I was state president, the ACLU established a regional office in Denver, which would serve us. Dorothy Davidson was appointed to head that position, and they had an attorney there, Steve Pevar. We began to get more help from them. Steve came out and initiated a number of cases for us, when we couldn't get local attorneys to do them. I wasn't very good at getting attorneys involved in our work; but Rich Siegel joined the political science department in 1965, and Rich was very oriented toward civil liberties, so he came into the ACLU, and he was better at getting attorneys to cooperate.

We got involved in some interesting cases. A Washoe County grand jury investigated some issue having to do with city government. Clyde Biglieri was a member of the Reno City Council, and, although the grand jury did not indict him, its report accused him of having done something wrong. We filed suit, claiming that the grand jury didn't have the authority to do that. (Steve Pevar handled the case.) They had the jurisdiction to investigate and indict for a crime, but not to accuse somebody of a crime. We won, and that is now Nevada law: a grand jury cannot accuse anybody of criminal action without a formal indictment.

We took a number of marijuana cases, because Nevada law made it a felony to possess a very small amount of marijuana, and you could be sent to prison for that. The big cities, Reno and Las Vegas, from fairly early on largely ignored that law. If they made any marijuana busts at all, the charges were dismissed. Nobody was actually prosecuted, so it was not a big problem. But from the small counties, the cow counties, every so often somebody would actually be sent to the state prison

for a year or so—some dumb kid imprisoned for having a joint. As far as I'm concerned, it's like alcohol—you can abuse it, but making simple possession a crime, and sending anybody to state prison and maybe ruining their life for it, is wrong. We kept trying to get judges to intervene in cases, hoping some judge would rule that way, but they never did.

At one point a student at the university came to see me in my office. His brother had been sentenced to state prison, and the judge who sentenced him invited a high school class in to the sentencing procedure so that they could learn from this not to smoke pot, which I thought was just *outrageous*. I felt so terrible. I had to tell him, "Well, we've tried several times, and we can't get anywhere. I'm very sorry. I agree with you. This is terrible," but we couldn't do anything.

The attitude toward the ACLU was not positive in many parts of the state. One of our first marijuana cases was out in Elko County. We got a cooperating attorney to go out there and defend this kid, but he would do it only on condition that we didn't make it public that he was doing it for us. [laughter]

Eddie Scott was Nevada's chief lobbyist for civil rights and other black interests. Known as "Bulldog Eddie" in southern Nevada, he was persistent and pretty effective, although nothing significant in the way of civil rights legislation got through the legislature until the national Civil Rights Act was passed.

Eddie had almost no formal education and didn't always speak standard English, but he was very smart; and he was very good at sound bites. Eddie learned early on that if a reporter was asking you a question, especially on TV, in order to get your message on the news,

you had to be able to compress it into a very small amount of time. [laughter] I never got good at that. But Eddie was very good at it, and he was very good at getting along with all sorts of people, even when he was lobbying for civil rights in the legislature. The cow-county senators were mostly the ones who had problems with civil rights, but they would talk with him, even though they didn't agree with his position, because he was such a nice guy. He was very skillful at human relations.

Eddie worked at the Sierra Pacific Power Company, but when legislative sessions came along, he would spend a great deal of time down at the capitol. He had an employment arrangement like John Dressler's—Sierra Pacific would give him time off, but he was an hourly worker, so he lost income. Eddie must have gotten the idea that if he could quit his job and get a little bit of money and work in an organization devoted specifically to civil rights in Reno, that he could do a lot of good things. And that happened for awhile.

It happened chiefly because Maya Miller put up some money so that some of us (Helen Stewart was one) could start the Reno Race Relations Center. It was established in the late 1960s in that building across from the university that was home to the Hobbit Hole. Then an allegation of police brutality was brought to Eddie as director of the Race Relations Center, and he told various people about it, and the ACLU created a task force. Myself and Isabel Kimble, a good friend of mine, who was also a member of the Fellowship (Unitarian Universalist Fellowship), were the chief members of this task force, and we worked with Eddie, who handled the publicity much better than we could have on this police brutality case.

The case involved a Northern Paiute man named Brady, and members of the Brady family came and talked to us. This man was an alcoholic, for sure, and he was drinking in bars all the time, and he was arrested in a bar in downtown Reno and died in jail. He had a massive injury to his head, and there were some photographs of his battered body. NARF, the Native American Rights Fund, got involved in this, and I sent them copies of the photographs. You could see boot marks on his abdomen. His family thought he had been killed by the police, and they were undoubtedly right, I think. They wanted an investigation, and Eddie got us started.

The ACLU task force sent letters, and we made some public statements, and we followed the whole process. Well, enough questions were raised that the city council appointed an ad hoc committee, headed by Jerry Whitehead, who was then simply an attorney. (Jerry went on to become a district judge, and later was forced by the FBI to resign, for whatever reason I don't know.) He had come to one of the early meetings of the ACLU in Nevada, so he was somewhat interested in civil rights. Jerry was the head of this committee, and it included people from the Indian community.

Harold Wyatt, the executive director of the ITC at that time, was a member of the committee, but fairly early on in the whole thing he resigned. He sent us a copy of the letter he wrote to Whitehead, saying, "What we're doing is simply looking over the police reports. We're not doing our own investigation, and this can't lead to anything good." I went to most of the hearings, if not all of them, and was there when they heard testimony from Ken Bronstein of the university's department of criminal justice.

There had been an autopsy. The thing that killed Mr. Brady was a massive blow to his head. The police claimed that the injury happened as they were apprehending him and he had fallen, hitting his head. (They specified front or back, but I can't remember which.) Ken Bronstein testified that what killed him was a massive blow to the side opposite the one the police claimed he struck when he fell. If you hit on one side, your brains go flying to the other, and are damaged as they hit the inside of the skull. And that's what happened to him. So the police story was inconsistent with the evidence, according to Bronstein's analysis.

Then there were these photographs that showed boot marks on his belly. He was kind of overweight, and there was lots of belly to see. The guy had been beaten. There was no doubt about it, I thought. The committee, however, concluded that it could not determine whether there had been any police brutality. We protested that. We recited all this evidence, and there was some public reporting of it on TV and in newspapers.

I felt really bad about the committee's decision, because there was no question in our minds that Brady had been beaten, but some good came of the whole thing in the end. The police department established an internal affairs position to look into things like that. Richard Kirkland, who was a graduate, I believe, of the criminal justice department at UNR, was appointed to that position. After a while, the department fired the guy who had probably beaten Mr. Brady and was beating other people. He appealed to the Civil Service Commission, and I went to the hearing on this. They upheld the firing.

The police department was located in a large building on East Second Street. Apparently, somebody from

the department knew of beatings that took place fairly often in the elevator of that building. You came in on the ground level, and you had to go up to the second floor to get booked, and it was a slow elevator. The beatings took place in there. So they fired one guy, at least, who had been doing the beating and installed a video camera in the elevator, so that somebody could watch it. That presumably corrected that particular problem. The Brady family didn't get an apology and didn't get any compensation for this killing, but at least that stopped the process. And that was Kirkland's first real, major contribution as a police officer. From there, he rose to become chief of police, Sheriff of Washoe County, and, eventually, head of the state Department of Public Safety.

From that time on, the police department was much more interested in what the ACLU thought. Some time after this, various people from the ACLU were invited down to tour the jail—probably on Kirkland's initiative. So we went through the jail, and I remember the drunk tank, where they put the alcoholics, was just a big room with no furniture in it at all. There was a water fountain on one wall, and some kind of padding all over the floor and up about six feet high on the walls. Alcoholics were brought in there and left to lie on the floor—they kept it fairly warm—until they recovered. That's how they handled alcoholics at that point. So we became very concerned about the treatment of alcoholics. Most of these people weren't even charged; they were just held a few hours and never charged with a crime. And their crime would have been public alcoholism, which is a dubious ground, I think, for incarcerating people. But anyway, they certainly were not being treated humanely at all.

A new police chief came along (this is before Kirkland became chief), and he invited a number of us with the ACLU to meet with him and tell him our concerns. We had breakfast at the Holiday Inn on the river. I think Chuck Zeh of Washoe Legal Services was there, too, and so we had this very good breakfast meeting. Somebody in the previous legislature had created an appropriation to enable medical treatment of alcoholics, rather than just throwing them in the drunk tank, and we told the police chief about it. Shortly after that, they moved the drunk tank, initially to some trailers by the Department of Motor Vehicles offices out toward Sparks. So they improved services, I think, in part because the police chief was willing to reach out to the ACLU and say, "Maybe you guys are not just nuts or wild-eyed radicals; you may know something." I think we had a little impact there.

Then we put together a coalition with Washoe Legal Services and other groups that we called "the jailhouse gang." For several years, we met for breakfast about once a week. Chuck Zeh was very interested in incarceration issues—he had a guy working for him who had been a prisoner in Carson City. We would include people from Legal Services in the south, also, when they were up here, and the American Friends Service Committee.

The American Friends Service Committee had a staff person in Reno for several years. Bill and Ann Scott lived over in Sterling Village, and they owned the house next door to their home. They provided office space for the Friends Service Committee in that house next door. They were wonderful people. Jeri Alcamo, a woman, was the first AFSC executive director, working in that office and working with the "jailhouse gang."

The jailhouse gang would talk things over and figure out what strategy we could use to improve jails and prisons in Nevada. We had some impact, I think, on a legislative interim committee investigation of the state's prisons. We went down and testified to the committee, and in at least one case we helped to get a new jail. In Elko County, the sheriff's office wanted a new jail, but they were having trouble getting appropriations for it. So they invited somebody out to make a tour. (I think it was this guy who worked for Chuck Zeh in Legal Services.) He went out and made an investigation of the jail—of course, it was in bad shape—and made his report, and that helped to get the new jail built.

The Nevada ACLU doesn't initiate actions. Somebody calls with a complaint, I was the guy most people called for years. That's what finally did me in. I'd had too much, and I had to quit. So you get this initial call. I remember one example: a young woman, who was Jewish, worked for the Forest Service somewhere in Douglas County. They insisted that she work on Saturdays, if that was when she was scheduled, and she told them, "No, I have to go to synagogue," and refused. So she called me up, and I took down the information.

Not everybody who calls up with a complaint gives you the full picture, of course, and some people are deliberately hiding things, or just telling you things wrong. So I couldn't—based on what she said— just call up the Forest Service official and say, "You got to give the young woman time off for her Sabbath." I had to do some investigation. It turned out she was right. We told the Forest Service on our letterhead that we thought this was a violation of civil liberties, and they let her do it. I don't

know whether it changed policy or not, but in that particular case it helped.

That initial call was called "intake." Sometimes people write letters, but mostly they call you, and the person doing the intake has to do a lot of work. Sometimes Hazel got calls, too, of course, because people knew her. But I got a lot, and that finally got to me. People would call all the time with things having to do with racial discrimination, or what they thought were violations of their rights by private employers. In the case of race discrimination, I'd listen empathetically and tell them, "Well, what you have to do here is go to the Equal Rights Commission first. And if they don't satisfactorily deal with it, then maybe we could help you out."

Anything that's done, somebody's going to ask, "Why didn't you go to the body that's set up to handle that?" We had to tell people with private employment problems, "Well, you could go talk to the labor commissioner," who is almost always somebody favorable to the worker's point of view. So sometimes we just simply referred people.

If it was something we could theoretically handle, and there wasn't anybody else that was supposed to deal with it, then we would take this to the next board meeting, either a chapter board meeting or a state board meeting. Those organizations operated in two stages. There is a manual listing all of the national ACLU's policy positions on all kinds of issues—very detailed and very intelligent, very able thing. So, if it was an issue you hadn't come up with before, you went to the manual to see whether it was something that was covered by ACLU policy. If it was clearly within the bounds of the policy, then at the board meeting you could discuss this, and

people would decide whether we could try to take some kind of action.

Since we had very limited resources, and for years didn't have any staff attorney—Steve Pevar occasionally would do something from Denver—we couldn't regularly go into the courts on things as much as we wanted to. You had to take several things into consideration. Unfortunately, one of them was whether or not, for any reasons that we knew, we would have trouble winning in a jury trial.

I remember spending more time than I wanted to with a woman who was driving with her daughter through Carlin, Nevada, before the freeway was finished around Carlin. There was simply a two-lane highway through the town, splitting the town into south and north segments. Well, she was driving through town, and she was pulled over by a sheriff's deputy and charged with speeding and taken to the station. She claimed her rights had been violated because the officer had been rude to her. Well, she told me this story, and it sounded like there might be something to it. But then her attorney called, and he told me that she had been going eighty-five miles an hour! That's through town. Little kiddies will be trying to cross the street. At that point I said, "Absolutely no way. This is the end of the line. No jury would ever, ever convict under those circumstances."

Then, there are less obvious things to consider. You have to think, "Would this particular case be confined to this particular person, or could we change policy through it?" Was it something that we could use to annul a regulation if it was violating civil liberties or something else? Then, if you decided you wanted to do something, you had to find an attorney who would help. (Dean Breeze, who was an attorney in Las Vegas, took a few

cases. He was an ACLU board member. He took a few cases from time to time, but they had to be in Las Vegas.) So we had to figure, if we go to court, where do we find an attorney who would take it? Somebody would be delegated to see if they could round up an attorney to do this. That's why our state meetings took at least half a day—we'd go over the cases individually, and it's complicated.

We didn't take nearly as many cases as we would have liked. We took on a few marijuana cases. One issue that the state board was interested in for years was not in the ACLU manual, and that was the issue of work cards for casino workers. In Las Vegas, especially when Sheriff Lamb was in office, we kept getting complaints that the sheriff's office was turning down people they didn't like, who were perfectly good people, experienced as dealers or whatever. They were just simply turning them down on arbitrary grounds. Well, we had these complaints regularly for years, and we tried to get some litigation on it, but we had to make our own policy. And we could make policy in areas where the national policy manual didn't apply, if it wasn't in conflict with the national.

When I left as chair, we had about three specific state policies. One of them was the work card issue, and one of them was card counting in twenty-one. Various people came to us and said, "This is unfair. Just because I can remember the cards that have been dealt, how can casinos refuse to let me play? They recognize me as a card counter, and they won't let me play. This is unfair." We agreed with that, but the national office had a little trouble with it when we came down on the counters' side and initiated a state policy on that issue. I don't think any of us were gamblers, but we thought it did sound unfair.

During the time that I was chair, a federal statute was enacted requiring public institutions to make all their buildings wheelchair accessible. The university didn't move very fast on it. We got some complaints, and Steve Pevar came over and won one requiring the university to move more quickly to make all its buildings wheelchair accessible. There must have been people at the university who were upset about it, because it took a lot of money. Jim Hulse was a long-time ACLU member and also a long-time close friend. "Yes," I told him, "I know this causes problems for the university, but the law requires it, and they aren't moving."

We handled lots of things simply by going to administrators and telling them, "We think this is wrong. Is there anything you can do about it?" And sometimes they would do something—either they thought about it and agreed that it was wrong, or they were afraid of being sued. Of course, a lot of people apparently had the idea that the ACLU is this big organization with lots of lawyers, so they were sort of afraid of us. (It amused the hell out of me, because we had so few resources.) So sometimes, when we went to people and said, "We think this is a civil liberties violation," they would do something about it to avoid, as they saw it, having to fight us in court. Usually they were not going to change policy, but they would reverse themselves on a specific case. That was roughly how it worked.

It was hard to step down from chairing the Nevada ACLU. After you've committed so many years I didn't initially drop out entirely. After I resigned, I would still attend state and northern chapter boards and take the minutes and prepare them. Then I'd go down to the office and do some grunt work from time to time. When

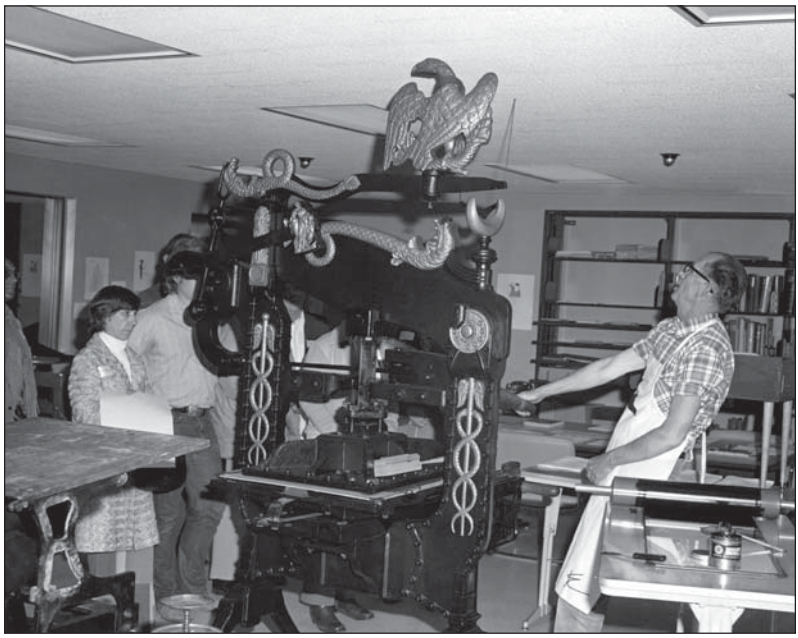
Jim Shields, who was a faculty member in our department for awhile, became our executive director, he created an ACLU of Nevada Foundation, which was a group that would never do any lobbying, so that contributions to it would be 501 (C3) deductible, according to Internal Revenue Service guidelines. That's the structure at the national level and most affiliates. Jim created the foundation, and I was one of the incorporators.

Counting all the part time work I put in, I figure that from its founding up till I finally couldn't do it anymore, I put in something like a quarter of a century in volunteer work for the ACLU in Nevada. For that, I think I was the first recipient of the Hazel Erskine Lifetime Achievement Award from the state ACLU.

13

Ken Carpenter had had high-level experience in the library at Berkeley before he came to Nevada. At the University of Nevada, he was in charge of the library's Special Collections department, and he was extremely able in his field. He knew so many things about how to make materials available to students and scholars and others, and he was always up with new technologies and new ideas. He was very able.

Ken established the Black Rock Press, a printing lab at the university with several very old hand presses. He had classes twice a year for students and anybody else. I took his printing class one time, and that was a great experience—he knew a great deal about printing, had very good aesthetic sense, and very good sense for the ideas behind it. While I was taking the class, he was printing for the first time a poem written by Walter Van Tilburg Clark in the early 1930s, which kind of looked ahead to *The Track of the Cat*. It was a long poem. Ken



Ken Carpenter, 1977. (Photograph courtesy of the University of Nevada-Reno Library, Special Collections.)

printed this, of course, on beautiful, hand-made paper, and at the beginning of each chapter of this book is a big, red splash, simulating blood, because it was a story that involved violence. He told us once how he did that. There was a tall cabinet over in the corner of the room where the Black Rock Press was located, and he set a holder up there with a medicine dropper full of red dye that he was using, or ink. For the beginning of each chapter of all the copies of the book, he would get up there and squeeze the thing, so each drop was unique in that particular way. It's a beautiful book, painstakingly and creatively put together by Ken. He was very good at that kind of thing.

One of the other things I found out in the printing class was that Special Collections has copies of some of the earliest books printed in the Western world. We have fifteenth century books there, and they're just *gorgeous*. They're just gorgeous! You have to wear gloves while handling the books, of course. The amazing thing is that some of the most beautiful books ever produced in the Western world were produced in the first few decades after they discovered printing. Some of the most beautiful books are illustrated by hand in color, the way they had been doing manuscripts by hand for a long time. Also, simply the print itself was so beautiful.

A former director of libraries, whose last name was Hill, I think, for years had an interest in this kind of thing, and Ken told me he had managed to get local financial support to buy some of these rare, early books back when the University of Nevada was quite small. So we have up there—most people don't know it, I'm sure—some really wonderful examples of early printing.

Ken clearly had something like the faith in what I call universal human rights. He was a civil libertarian. I was taking his printing class when Reagan invaded Grenada. (I never did know what that was all about. It wasn't about rescuing medical students. They weren't in any danger, as the TV told us at the time.) We briefly discussed it in class one day, and both of us thought, "Well, this is outrageous. I don't know what Reagan thinks he's doing. He thinks he rules the world." And unfortunately, we've had presidents since then who think that, too. [laughter]

Ken had a Land Rover, and he did a lot of traveling in it before his wife got ill, driving around the state investigating all the remote but beautiful areas that you

get out here. He took us to Seven Troughs once, which is, among other things, a mining area northwest of Lovelock, and now quite isolated. There is a big outcrop of obsidian there, which had been a quarry for Native Americans for a long time.

Ken told me once that he and his wife were somewhere up in north central Nevada, and they crossed a mountain range into a valley. They had no idea where they were, so they drove around for awhile, and they came to a ranch and pulled up at the door of the ranch house, and a couple dogs came out barking. Then this rancher comes walking out, and Ken says, "Where are we?" And the rancher says, "You're here. Come in and have a drink." [laughter] They got to be good friends. The ranch had a hot springs on it, and they'd go out and visit the rancher and have a great time in the hot springs and come back and have a great meal and great discussion with really good friends.

Ken was a candidate to become director of the university library, a position for which he was highly qualified, but the regents chose Harold "Hap" Morehouse instead. I didn't know why they made the decision . . . and I still don't know why. Ken was obviously more qualified than Hap, by far. After that, it seemed to me that Hap and Ken actually collaborated . . . that they were a kind of co-directorship, with Ken providing much of the leadership of the library system during the time that Hap was director. That's my impression. And I feel fairly confident that's the case. So I think it worked out very well, and Ken never said anything indicating bitterness that he hadn't been promoted.

14

Charles Armstrong was president of the university when I arrived. I thought he was doing well, but I don't remember very much about him. When Armstrong left, he was replaced as president for one year by Neil Humphrey. Then Nevada's system of higher education was reorganized, and we basically copied California's. Neil became the head guy in the system. I got to know Neil fairly early—he was a numbers cruncher. He had, I believe, an accounting background, and he was good at budgeting in a technical sense. I got in touch with him soon after we arrived in Reno, in part because he had an interest in Native Americans. So we actually got to know Neil socially a little bit before he moved up. I didn't realize he was somebody headed for the top.

Neil was succeeded by N. Edd Miller. Miller was, in my judgment, the best president of the university during the time that I've been here. First of all, he was extremely hard working. Us Puritans appreciate that. He



Neil Humphrey. (Photograph courtesy of the University of Nevada-Reno Library, Special Collections.)

was much more hard working than I ever was. I didn't know this until the Edd Miller Days that were held later on in his administration, but he used to show up at something like six o'clock every morning and leave after everybody else had left at night.

Edd was also extremely open. Anybody could get in to go see him about anything, and he would really listen. He was very bright, and if you sent anything to him in writing in advance of a meeting—and us scholarly types tend to do that—he had read it and comprehended it by the time you met, so you didn't have to do much explaining. He would listen respectfully, and if he thought you had an unsound position, he'd say, "No. This is naïve," or "We tried that, and it didn't work, and for this reason," et cetera. He was very frank about things. If he approved of what you were recommending, he would say so, and he would try to help you get it done.

One thing he tried to help me with was an effort to make the university experience better for Native Americans. I realized early on that one of the reasons we didn't have very many Native American students at the university, and why some of them that came left fairly

early or didn't do well, was because they carried remnants of Indian culture that were certainly different from the general culture. Plus, most of the Indians lived in small reservations or towns around Nevada; they're not urban types at all. And rural kids, in general, who came here would have trouble acclimating to Reno . . . "a great, semi-metropolitan area," as Cory Farley says. [laughter] Compared with Austin or Owyhee or Nixon, Reno's very urban, and it's very different. And even if they didn't encounter any open discrimination, they undoubtedly knew something about it .



N. Edd Miller. (Photograph courtesy of the University of Nevada-Reno Library, Special Collections.)

I figured that one of the things that might help them adjust would be to get some kind of support system in place specifically for Native American students, because they had the worst problem. I thought about my co-op days and how important that was, and I thought maybe we could help set up a renovated rooming house or something, where Native American students could come when they first came to the university, if they wanted to. They could be with other Indians, and there would be some support there.

So I talked to N. Edd Miller about that. He said, "Well, that sounds like a constructive thing. What can we do to get that started? Will you see if this can be done?" We got some kind of committee together to talk about it. Of course, it would have required money, but we didn't get that far. The idea was shot down by the director of the State Indian Affairs Commission. He didn't say why; he just vetoed it. I have a feeling that since he didn't know me very well, he thought, "Well, this is a white guy trying to interfere in Native American matters he doesn't know anything about." I *was* trying to intervene in a sense, but I thought it might be helpful, and it might be supportive to the Native American community. But it never went anywhere.

Edd was like that. One reason he had to work so hard was that he was accessible to everybody; but also it was because if there were any good ideas, he would support them and try to help people get them carried out. He did that for everybody. Often, he would take proposals to the board of regents, and they would listen more or less respectfully and then not do what he wanted them to do. But he was *always* trying to be very helpful in every way he could. And he had all the right academic values.

I interviewed Edd in preparation for my history of the modern civil rights movement in the state, and he referred me first to an oral history he had already given that was in the collection of the Oral History Program. In the meantime, he told me about some things he had done in Michigan, where he'd been an academic administrator before he came to the University of Nevada, to try to increase the number of black and other minority faculty members. So I knew he was sympathetic to that point of view.

When Edd left Reno, he went to the University of Maine, but when he retired, he and Edwina came back to Reno to live. Now he is actively involved in helping open the Lear Theater. He helped raise a lot of money so that they could buy the Christian Science Building. The architect for that building was a black architect from Los Angeles, Paul R. Williams. One of the committees on which Edd and I serve is headed by Ken Dalton, a local black guy who's very interested in black history. We are raising money to commission a bust of Paul Williams for the lobby of the building and various exhibits honoring him. He was a famous architect and a very good one. Edd is still doing that kind of thing. That's the kind of guy he is.

Edd had the misfortune to be president when the Adamian affair unfolded after the Kent State killings and the subsequent demonstrations on our campus. This was in 1970. Then a little later, in 1971, the Black Student Organization people took over the student union for a while. And Edd reacted, in my opinion, in both cases, as he should have reacted. He didn't have this really damaging notion that the world is made up of entirely good people and entirely bad people. He realized that while taking over the student union wasn't something that could last and be approved by the university, the black students did have concerns that they wanted to be heard. I thought he handled it very well, and no violence occurred. People were afraid terrible things were going to happen, but they *didn't*. But the regents didn't react favorably to that at all. I think they thought that he should have used repression. And so I think he was forced out by the regents partly because of these kinds of things.

Almost all segments of the campus thought Edd was the best president we had ever had. I arrived on cam-

pus one day, and there were signs all over the place: "This is N. Edd Miller Day," and there was a rally in support of him on the grassy area just south of Manzanita Lake. And everybody—from the faculty and students to the rest of the staff and some alumni who'd been alerted to this—succeeded in keeping it from Edd until he arrived at his usual time, and here's this delegation with all these signs. They did that, and that was amazing!

That was a time in the nation's history when, on many campuses, there was a lot of student criticism, or



N. Edd Miller Day, October 17, 1969. (Photograph courtesy of the University of Nevada-Reno Library, Special Collections.)

worse, of university administration. Usually the target was whoever happened to be the president at the time. And here is this university president who is so well liked on his campus that he has these things spontaneously organized for him. It made headlines across the country! I thought he was really great, and he's still a great guy. Edd Miller was a great president.

Edd departed in 1973, and we had an interim president, an acting president, for only one year. That was James Anderson. I didn't know much of him. I think he was an engineer. He was succeeded by Max Milam, who lasted only four years, and I did have some contact with Max. In the preparation for hiring a new president, Milam's vita was circulated among the faculty, and it was a very long thing. I thought it was padded—if you mention the same thing in several different parts of a vita, you're pushing things. So I was not impressed.

When Milam first came, I was working on affirmative action programs, and Mike Coray and I talked with him together about what had gone on in the recent past. That was after Barbara Thornton and I and someone else had produced an extensive report on affirmative action on campus, suggesting



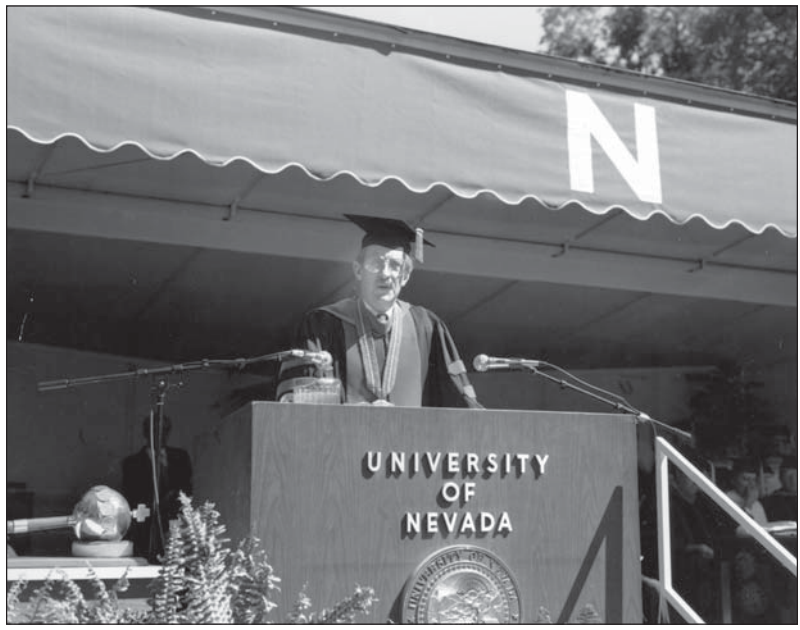
Max Milam, 1975. (Photograph courtesy of the University of Nevada-Reno Library, Special Collections.)

ways that we could enlarge the faculty by bringing in minority faculty members. That was the context. We informed Max of what was going on and what we recommended, but nothing happened as a result of that.

I found out later that that was a pattern. If you wanted to get permission from Max Milam to do things, the thing to do was to compose a letter saying specifically what you wanted him to do and go in and talk to him. If he said yes, you wrote him a note thanking him for approving it, because he wouldn't do anything. There would be nothing done by him. But then you could use that letter and your thank-you note as authority to go ahead. I figured that out. Sometimes I'm not as dumb as I look. [laughter]

Milam just didn't get things done the way Edd Miller had. I'm sure he didn't work as hard, and he just didn't get much done. My impression, which could be wrong, is that his main achievement during his period as president was the installation of a big concrete monolith at the corner of Ninth and Virginia, carrying the legend, "University of Nevada, Reno." [laughter] That's the sort of thing that I remember him for.

Milam was essentially fired by the board of regents after four years, and he was succeeded, at first on an interim basis, by Joe Crowley, who came out of the political science department. He wasn't chair of our department very long—maybe a couple of years. He was chair during the period when all these issues involving race were arising. He once conducted a course on African-American politics, or something like that, specifically dealing with this subject. And he had black students . . . people like Jesse Sattwhite, who was a little difficult to deal with. [laughter] Joe did that very well. He had an interest in this topic, and he actually went out and taught



Joe Crowley, 1985. (Photograph courtesy of the University of Nevada-Reno Library, Special Collections.)

a special course while he was department chair on this subject.

Joe had all the right academic values when he became president, and I thought he had a good administration. The university advanced in a variety ways. One thing they did was a special fund drive to increase the university endowment, and it worked. Paul Page, the vice president for development, was assigned to run that, but it was one of Joe's initiatives. And it succeeded—it raised more money than had ever before been raised from private sources for the university.

Joe did a number of other things. When the code problem came up, probably around 1980 . . . the regents for some reason, proposed revisions to the system code

that many in the faculty thought would make serious inroads on tenure, academic freedom, and participation of the faculty in decision-making. The direction was really disturbing to a number of us. Jim Hulse had revamped and revitalized the campus chapter of the AAUP (American Association of University Professors), and he led our response to the proposed code. We read the code very carefully and debated it and considered it, and we agreed that it offered potential dangers.

One of the dangers was that it set up a new system, under which the institution could hire people to do exactly what tenured faculty members did, but not in tenure-track positions. We thought that this could, if applied systematically at some time, greatly reduce the tenure system in the university, which the American Association of University Professors had decided long before was necessary to protect academic freedom. Universities are collectively the major institution in this country in which highly trained and competent people explore all kinds of topics, some of which have to do with public policy, some of which don't, but many of which are controversial to somebody or other, without anybody telling them what to do. They're simply following their interest in scholarship, or even sometimes personal advancement, and nobody tells them what to believe. It's very important that society have institutions like that alive and flourishing, because almost all the other major institutions of this society are dominated from the top. Whether it's the army or General Motors or even many labor unions, they tell their employees what they must believe.

It's possible for a tenured faculty member, after getting tenure, to sort of kick back and not do much, and that *occasionally* happens. Or occasionally you get some tenured professor who goes off in some essentially mean-

ingless direction, but you can't do anything about it, because you can't tell them what to do. But I don't think this happens very often, for a variety of reasons. One of the things is, it's very difficult to even get into a tenure track, much less actually achieve tenure. There are all those years spent getting a Ph.D., including writing a dissertation, which is almost a book and is up to scholarly standards. That's a difficult thing to do. That requires you to work hard—well, it required *me* to work very hard—and it's quite difficult for most people, even if they're very able.

Then, when you first get hired on a faculty, you learn what I learned, and what most people learn in that situation. You learn that teaching a class yourself is different from taking it. Being able to remember well enough on exams what somebody told you is very different from standing up in front of a class and saying what you believe to be true, or having interaction with the class, because if you don't know what you're doing, you're going to make a fool of yourself. So, your first courses require an enormous amount of work. And usually people have not been trained to teach. In my case, this was what happened. I was never fully in charge of a course—determining what would be taught, textbooks, and how it would be taught, and everything else—until I got my first teaching job. When I got to Nevada, I had had several years of teaching, but I was now to teach courses that I had never taught before. I always revise my courses from year to year anyway, but from the beginning it is very much more difficult, even if you're used to teaching.

So faculty members have to go through all this, and when you first start teaching full time, maybe you've still got your dissertation to finish, and you're teaching for the first time, which is a shock, and you're learning

new courses, and you're also supposed to be turning out scholarly publications so that you can get tenure. Well, there may be people brilliant enough or well enough organized that that's not a difficult thing, but for most of us, that takes many years of very hard work and anxiety.

I once read a book called *The Academic Market Place*, about what being an academic is like. The authors are two sociologists. At one point they say, "There are typically three periods of anxiety in the life of any academic man (it was gender specific), corresponding roughly with the early, middle, and late parts of his career." [laughter] I don't know about the middle and late parts, but certainly the early part is correct. You don't get tenure easily at any decent institution, and obviously UNR is a decent institution. You do it after years of hard work and some anxiety. So by that time the chances are very high that you're really committed to this as a way of life—you believe the values, and you want to work hard. The notion that anybody would go through all that and then just want to go off and do something to entertain themselves doesn't make sense. I know, because I have a Puritan view of work, and the only reason I'm not absolutely *certain* that I'm clinically addicted to work is that I have never tried to stop. [laughter]

Tenure was being threatened by the code revisions. Other things were, as well. The proposed code reduced faculty involvement in the decision making process. Universities are strange systems—Max Weber was wrong, if he thought they were rational bureaucracies. [laughter] They have a dual decision-making structure. You have the administration over here, which looks like the administration of a corporation with somebody at the head giving orders to people below and then down to the grunts. And on paper, that's partly the way universi-

ties operate, in some respects. Then over here, you have a collection of elected bodies in which the faculty can introduce new ideas and propose new things and sometimes decide things. You've got this very complex and inherently unwieldy kind of structure, but the AAUP decided many years ago that one of the requirements for a viable university is that the faculty have some participation in the making of decisions. The code clearly cut that down; it was clearly intended to reduce the significance of faculty decision-making.

One of the things I had learned about myself at Parsons College was that I was genuinely committed to the standards of academia. Sometime shortly after the code had been enacted, Mary and I were hiking down in the Valley of Fire in southern Nevada. (The regents hadn't paid any particular attention to faculty concerns and recommendations that anybody could notice. They had just gone ahead and enacted the code without significant change.) We began talking about the code and what it meant to academic freedom. We were discussing the possibility of test cases in which faculty members would challenge one or another aspect of the code and risk being fired or suspended from the job until the issue was resolved in court. Mary and I both agreed that if that tactic were adopted, I would do that. I didn't want to do it, but I believed strongly enough that I would do it.

I don't know what was behind what the regents were doing. There was a period when various people in the faculty were trying to explain our position, and a number of us from the AAUP had a meeting with Dan Klaich, who was a regent at that time. (I'd actually had Dan as a student many years before. He was a bright guy, a nice guy.) We're explaining our objections to the code, and in the middle of this, Dan made some reference to

whining. He thought we were whining! I *never* whine, and that really upset me. He obviously didn't understand the principles that we were talking about and how they were connected to things in the code. So he was listening, but he wasn't listening. He wasn't really understanding.

We talked to President Crowley a couple of times during this, and he told us he agreed with our analysis that the code was potentially dangerous. He assured us, however, that he had no intention of using it, if they passed it, to do anything to weaken tenure or implement any of the other provisions that concerned us. We believed him. But he didn't really forcibly present our case, which he basically agreed with us on, to the regents. One of the administrators down at UNLV actually did challenge the code and was fired for taking this position. He then sued and won a Nevada Supreme Court decision—while administrators serve at the pleasure of their employers, unlike tenured faculty members, even administrators can't be fired simply for expressing ideas that the board of regents doesn't like. So they reinstated him, which is an important legal protection for tenure as a means of defending the freedom of people in the university to express any ideas they believe are true. The result was a significant strengthening of academic freedom in the university system.

The faculty organization that we know today as the Nevada Faculty Alliance was established either during the code controversy or not long after the code was adopted. Several people were the initiators of this. My memory is that the leaders were Jim Richardson and Hugh Mozingo, who was, I believe, the first president of the chapter. It was initially a chapter of The National Society of Professors, which was more like a labor union

than the AAUP and was affiliated with the National Education Association. We organized, and I was in the initial group, though other people took the initiative for doing the work. We were not hostile to the AAUP at all, and the AAUP continued, but we thought we needed another faculty voice.

15

In the mid-1980s, I came to the conclusion that it was time for me to retire. There were several factors in my decision. First of all, somebody (I think the regents) concluded that UNR had become top heavy with full professors. And because full professors get paid more, that was a money problem. One of our faculty had won a court decision that said that you couldn't force a faculty member to retire solely because of age. He was seventy, as I remember, so maybe the faculty was getting a little overloaded at that level. Anyway, in response, the administration set up incentives for some people to retire early.

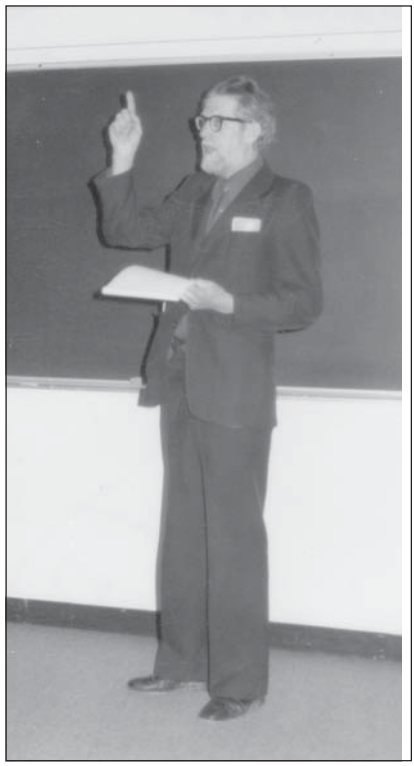
At first I wondered, after all this trouble about the code, whether somebody wasn't trying to get rid of some people. But nobody pressured me. Nobody suggested I take advantage of the early retirement inducements that were offered. The regents were simply trying to save money. They created an early retirement program that

offered significant financial incentives to full professors to retire early.

The second factor was that while I had done a fair amount of research and some publication, I wasn't basically getting anywhere with my intellectual work—with writing the things I really wanted to write—and I knew that if I didn't have to teach anymore, I would get more of that done. That's turned out to be true. Most of the things I've published have been written since 1986.

I was just beginning to get the hang of teaching by the time I retired, and I don't think I was a particularly good teacher in many ways. That may have been partly due to my shyness; but initially, I thought teaching was just getting up and giving lectures about what you knew. I didn't have much interaction with the class, and that's not the best way for them to learn. [laughter] And I think most students must have thought I was dull and boring. You're dealing with political theory, after all! It's not easy to reach people about ideas that are complex, that they'd never heard of before, and I think I wasn't doing a particularly good job for a number of years.

I was very conscientious, however. I worked hard in my courses, and I always gave exams which required students to write something. (A multiple-choice exam in an upper-division course is impossible.) And I always had them write term papers, and I always read them very carefully and edited them and everything. So I worked very hard at this kind of thing, but I hated teaching. Not teaching—I hated grading. Grading essay exams and term papers puts a real strain on a professor, because you've got to make judgments that aren't easy to quantify. You can't be certain that you're giving the right grade to this student.



"I thought teaching was just getting up and giving lectures."

Also, I was never certain about what level of expertise in the subject matter should be expected of the student. My courses in political theory were junior-level courses, junior and senior, but what exactly should an undergraduate at that stage already know about the Western tradition? Who knows, precisely? That's, again, a subjective thing, and it always bothered me. Grading takes a great deal of time if you do it conscientiously, and it was the major thing that always made me anxious, because I could never be sure I was doing the right thing.

Student evaluations of my teaching were never overwhelmingly favorable. They revealed a few things that I didn't know I was doing. For instance, some would say, "Several times he kept us two or three minutes past the bell." Oh, never do that! Never do that! [laughter] And I wasn't aware that I was doing it, but I realized, yes, I have, because occasionally I'm in the middle of something, and I want to go on and finish it . . . and that's not something you do. I caught things like that from the evaluations. I didn't have the highest rating in the department;

I didn't have the lowest rating; but there wasn't anything significant that I learned from evaluations.

It's a good idea to have student evaluations, but they are vague and subjective. I knew I wasn't the most popular teacher with many students, although a number of former students have told me they learned a lot from me. Even a couple of legislators said in legislative hearings that they owed a great deal to what they had learned in classes they took from me and Rich Siegel. So I wasn't a complete bust, but I also wasn't an outstanding teacher. I know that.

So you put all that stuff together I figured, well, I'm better off getting out of the classroom. I would have less income, but Mary was working and not ready to retire just yet. I never made a lot of money as a professor, but my pension would be OK, and I had research and writing that I wanted to do. I can do that pretty well. I can't remake the scholarly world—I'm not that brilliant—but I can develop this, and I know I can get these things done, if I just have time.

Between the prospect of having more time and having a little bit of a financial incentive and being happy to get rid of the aspects of teaching I didn't like, early retirement was the right thing to do, and I haven't regretted it. I have spent more time in retirement doing community service unconnected with my basic intellectual interests than I had intended to, and that's one reason I didn't get as much writing done as I had hoped. But I got a lot done. Most of what I've published has been written and published since I've retired. Us Puritans love work, and so that part of it didn't bother me at all. [laughter]

16

There are those who question whether or not political science is actually a science; and if so, how do you go about practicing it in scientific fashion? Well, the nature of the subject matter, human behavior, is such that you can't be fully scientific, but you should approximate the scientific method as well as you can. I concluded years ago that maybe "political science" was a misnomer. In fact, at Princeton it's called the "Department of Politics," and there are a few other departments with similar names. But to the extent that I could, I learned and used scientific techniques.

I had some training at Berkeley in survey research, though not hands on training. When I got to the Bureau of Governmental Research here at the University of Nevada, that was useful, because there had to be a public opinion survey as part of the community action program, and there wasn't anybody else around to do it. With help from people who knew more about particular parts of it,

and had actually done these things, we put together, I think, a decent survey. If I had been able to get financial support, so I could build a survey research center, I would probably have continued in that line, because survey research is a way of gathering information scientifically. It's limited, however, because the very making up of a questionnaire assumes a structure of ideas in the heads of the people who created the questionnaire

If you're asking questions, say, about attitudes toward race, the big question is: are the categories set up by the researcher actually the categories in which respondents think? Even by survey research, you can't perceive directly what is going on in people's heads, which is what you're interested in at that point. And there's always some sense in which the form of the question limits and delimits the meaning of the answer. That's very difficult to do and deal with in a purely scientific way.

Another of the problems with making studies of human behavior totally scientific, which took me a long time to grasp, is that people are not purely rational about *anything* important, including public policy questions. Different events, different people, different values have emotional loading, and most people are not even concerned about being very rational. Surveyors have asked national samples if they believe in magic, and at least as many people say they do believe there is magic and it affects their lives, as say they believe in the scientific structure of ideas.

An awful lot of people out there don't even want to be rational in the sense in which a scholar does. And yet the scholar is trying to produce something that will advance knowledge of what people think in rational form. This is difficult to do. You should be as scientific as possible, but being scientific means that you should pose

questions in the form of hypotheses which can be tested, if possible, by experiment. With human subjects you can't do that.

I used to use something in my introductory classes, because I thought it was very significantly, and the students liked it. A psychologist, Stanley Milgram, did authority experiments by hooking people up to what they thought was a machine that gave electric shocks in increasing quantity to an unseen student. He set up this machine so that the subject of the experiment, who, of course, didn't know what it was about, would ask questions of a person they had seen before the experiment began. They didn't know the person, but they knew there was a real person back there. And if the person gave the right answer, that was fine; but if he didn't, the subject was to give the person a shock with this machine, and the more mistakes the person made, the heavier the electric shock. Actually, no shocks were being administered at all, but the subjects of the experiment *thought* they were.

Milgram thought that very few people would be obedient and go on shocking other people for very long. In fact, he found most were quite willing to continue until they ran out of time. [laughter] Maybe the person who was playing the victim would actually speak, a scripted thing. He would ask the subject to stop, and then he would say, "No, you gotta stop!" (He was supposedly strapped in, couldn't escape.) "You gotta stop. I have a heart condition. My heart's giving me trouble. You gotta stop." And then there would be silence. There were people who actually believed that they had killed somebody as a result of this.

Well, it's a fascinating set of experiments, because there was no coercion involved at all. People would just

walk in off the street and be hired to do this. And of course, they were lied to, and they were led to believe they were hurting people. Now, with our rules about "human subjects research," you can't do that. But this was a very revealing experiment, because it was about authority. It was set up so that the scientist was in charge of things, and people were being paid a little bit, but they were told that if they quit at any time, they'd still get their pay.

There was no coercion. Somebody in a white jacket who was supposed to be a scientist would sit by people, and when a subject would say, "Well, should I stop?" the person would say things like, "No, no, go on." But they didn't say anything coercive. They didn't say you had to. They didn't threaten anything if you went on. It was just about authority, and it helped explain how the Holocaust could happen.

Well, that was scientific investigation, and you can do some of that, and a lot of it has been done, but it's extremely difficult to carry through in a systematic way on really big topics. The extent to which any particular scholar of any particular time has access to the skill necessary to be more scientific, and the institutional structure that allows them to actually proceed according to what they know, limits the extent to which we can be scientific. We've gotten so we can predict voting for candidates in public elections in this country fairly well, but even there, we're often wrong.

I used to be taken with what we called—at least in political science—positivism, which is pretty much like logical positivism in philosophy, but not entirely. It says that there are basically only three kinds of propositions. (I'm oversimplifying, but) Only three kinds of propositions: logical propositions, which are true because that

is what it means to be a logical proposition [laughter]; statements about matters of fact, which you can check empirically; and statements about values. The positivists in our discipline, often called behaviorists after World War II, thought that to become scientific, we have to give up altogether making statements about moral questions.

But you can apply reason, which is what scholars are supposed to be doing, to all these kinds of questions, even if imperfectly. My view is that you should be as scientific as you can, given whatever limits are operating, but not shy away from important topics such as the validity of universal human rights, which is very central to my whole way of thinking about things, simply because there are limits to what you can know about it scientifically. I think there are very good reasons for believing in universal human rights. They are not fully, completely established by science, but then, nothing is completely established by science. No matter whether you proceed from faith or reason alone, absolute knowledge is unknowable to human beings, in my opinion. I gave up trying to find absolute truth a long time ago.

I got interested in the things I thought I could establish that would be important in my profession and also in my life. I've always had an interest in what impact anything I knew or learned as a scholar might have on how people actually lived, and how it might make other people happy and might make me better morally. I think it has to do with my family and various things that happened to me when I was young that profoundly affected me.

Years ago, I learned from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* that to a certain extent you can create, in an ongoing process, the kind of person you think you ought to be. Morality by definition is a set of rules for how to be-

have, which is different from self-interest. If you adopt a moral code, even if you don't know for sure that that's absolutely correct, and you try to live according to it, what that does is shape your life, so that the next time you have a question like that, it's easier to answer in the direction in which you headed by making your moral decision.

You can shape the kind of person you want to become by the decisions you make. I've believed for a long time that as you live your life, the choices you make inevitably involve moral decisions if they're of any significance. Life is a matter of making choices involving moral decisions, but also notions about what reality is like. In none of that can you get absolute certainty.

I didn't proceed very far down the road of being an undisputed scientist in my work. I did some early work in survey research, and I did some early work in measuring attitudes more scientifically than we had before, and so forth. But I didn't really do much in that, because I got off into areas where those kinds of things weren't particularly appropriate, and because I lacked the knowledge and skills to advance in those fields. I'm proud of a good part of the work I've done, but I don't know that it can be called scientific.

17

My Grandfather Weaver was a Methodist minister for many years, a parish minister. He served on one of the Apache reservations in New Mexico for awhile and in various churches in Kansas. When he retired from the ministry, he worked for many years for the Kansas Children's Home. He wasn't a recruiter, exactly, but he'd go around to people with kids who were orphans and offer them a chance to go to the Home. He did this until shortly before his death in 1947 at the age of about eighty-three.

My grandfather was a fine man, a great role model for me, although I never had the commitment to his particular religious beliefs, which he lived by. He wasn't exactly a fundamentalist, but he believed that anybody could read and understand the Bible. (Not so, if you ever tried to do that! [laughter] Even if you assume that the text in front of you is the text, which is always not the case.) We had prayers with meals and Bible readings all

the time. He was good; he was obviously sincere, obviously knew the Bible and thought it was very important.

Grandfather didn't have much of a sense of humor, but he was a very nice guy. I considered him in some ways a Puritan. Of course, what you mean by Puritan can vary . . . but partly, it's being theologically pessimistic about salvation. In the eighteenth century in this country, people began to move away from the notion that if you believed in Christ, you would get salvation, at least if you went through certain rituals and so forth. Unitarian Universalists, of which I am one, believe the function of religion is to guide you in living in this world. You don't worry about salvation, but you have an optimistic view of things. I don't worry about salvation.

I'm an agnostic, but I'm a religious agnostic. I don't know whether there is a supernatural order, or, if so, how you know what it is, but I think I'm a religious person. My grandfather would have been appalled! But in some ways I have tried to build my life on his model, and especially Ben's model. Ben didn't talk much about religion. He went to church, and he was a Sunday-school teacher for decades, but he didn't talk much about it at home. So I don't know for sure what Ben believed, even though, when I was living with his family, we went to his church.

And when I lived with Aunt Beth and Uncle Herbert, I went with them to their Evangelical Reformed Church. I actually went through confirmation and became a member, but I never really held any particular commitment. In fact, I had become skeptical of theology pretty early on. To me, what I regard as my faith is very important, but, theologically, my grandfather would have been appalled, because I'm an agnostic. I'm a Christian like Thomas Jefferson was a Christian—he was really a Deist, with an Enlightenment attitude. I regard Jesus as

a moral exemplar, but only one of many. But that's getting off the subject. [laughter]

As a youth, I don't remember being rebellious in any way except in religion. My brother provided the initial impetus. He abandoned Christianity and then began talking to me about it, and I began thinking about these things, and I shifted to a kind of skeptical position. I didn't again think of myself as being religious until some years after we started going to the Unitarian Fellowship in Reno. I came to realize this is a faith, even if it looks like a non-faith to just about everybody else! [laughter] It is a faith.

Much of the moral foundation that I have brought to my professional and personal life arises from my membership in the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Reno, which became the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Northern Nevada. That's a mouthful, so I prefer simply to call our congregation the Fellowship. I think of myself as a Unitarian Universalist and have been actively involved in this congregation to some extent or another since November of 1963. It's been a long process. Unitarian Universalists are big on discovery—self-discovery and other discovery—as a central part of religion, and it took me quite a long time to realize I was a religious person, even after I was involved with the Fellowship.

At some time during high school, I decided I didn't believe in God. I never really decided that I could prove the non-existence of God, that I was an atheist, but I was an agnostic, and I didn't see much point to positing God as the central religious fact. All the way through college, I thought of myself as not being religious for that reason. There was a Unitarian Church in Lawrence when I was going to school there. It was headed by the Reverend Homer Jack, who, I found out later, was a very important person in the denomination, and particularly in civil

rights activities engaged in by Unitarian Universalists. But I never went to the church there. I never had any interest in it. I didn't think of myself as a religious person, and that continued until sometime after we started going to the Unitarian Fellowship here.

We started going to the Fellowship mainly because we wanted some place where our kids could get some kind of religious instruction. We assumed that when they got to be adults, they would make up their own minds, determine their own opinions on this. But we didn't know what to tell them about religion. If you tell too young a child all the reasons why you're a skeptic about whether there even is a supernatural order, you're just going to confuse him or her and possibly upset them.

The turning point there occurred when we lived in Fairfield, when I was teaching at Parsons. Our next door neighbor, Frosty Westering, was the coach at Parsons. The Westerings were very religious people. They had small children the same age as ours, and our kids played together all the time, and obviously, among other things, they talked about God and various religious questions. One morning Mary and I were waking up, and Kathy, who was in kindergarten at the time, came in and sat on the bed and said very seriously, "I want to know the truth about this God business." [laughter]

That told us we had a bright kid here, and we wondered how we were going to respond. When we got to Reno, we thought it was time to see to it that our children had some knowledge of religion. Mary had occasionally attended a Unitarian Universalist church in Lincoln, Nebraska, and she knew that they offered Sunday school for kids, so we decided to see what the Reno congregation had to offer.

The Reno Fellowship had been started in 1958-1959 at the instance of the national association, at that time the American Unitarian Association, which is headquartered in Boston. The national denomination was shrinking, and they decided as one method of reviving things that they would try to start Fellowships, small groups without ministers, around the country, and then maybe these would grow into churches later. I think that the guy in charge of that in Boston at the time was Monroe Husbands. He got in contact with people in Reno, and the Fellowship was founded in 1958, getting recognition from the national association in 1959. It had a fairly successful beginning period, and then it declined and almost died out during the year in which we came, as it happened.

The first service we went to, they were holding meetings in the Nevada Art Gallery, which used to be in a house on Washington Street. They held services in the evening on Sunday, and the service consisted mainly of somebody reading a sermon sent out by the American Unitarian Association in Boston. At the first one we attended, Berkeley Black read a sermon, and there was some discussion. (It's been said that a Unitarian Universalist is someone who approaches every question with an open mouth. [laughter] We *always* talk about things. We don't just listen to what somebody else says, we talk about it.) So there was discussion, and then we adjourned to a room next door and had coffee and continued the discussion.

There were very few people there. We never got to know Berkeley Black, because he left town shortly after that to take a job, but we did meet some extremely interesting people, such as the Magnettes. Jules Magnette was the psychiatrist who was the head of the Nevada

Mental Health Institute in Sparks. His wife's name was Frances. Frances was a very patrician-looking, white haired woman—handsome more than beautiful, but really striking, and very sophisticated. She was a leader of a group called the Alliance Francaise. (I never learned French well enough to join that group.) I was so impressed with the people there, particularly with Frances, that we started coming back.

Well, it turned out that was the time of troubles. They didn't even have sermons or any kind of services regularly for some time, and there were meetings in people's homes to decide whether to disband. One of the important people in the Fellowship was Dr. Billie Guss. She was the wife of the man who was head of the chemistry department for years at UNR, and she was very important in the revival. I remember a meeting in her home at which there were probably only five or six people present, and we talked about whether or not to continue. Well, Mary and I were interested, and the Hulses were interested, and we wanted to continue, but we weren't able to put out a newsletter. Then there was a small meeting with Husbands, who came out from Boston. I didn't go to that because I had a class the next morning, and I had a great deal of work to do to prepare. But Mary went. The decision was made at that meeting to continue.

One of the reasons we didn't disband altogether in 1964 was because we had a building fund that had been established earlier. The building fund started with Bob Bauer. He was an early member of the Reno Fellowship, and he was a social worker who was later the director of the welfare division at the state level. He made a thousand-dollar gift to the Fellowship to start a building fund, on condition that it be matched. And people did that. Somebody invested the two thousand dollars in a

couple of lots in Sparks, and as the area grew in a very short time, sold them for twice what had been paid. So we had four thousand dollars in the building fund, and, as it turned out, that was critical. (We now own our land and have two buildings on it. Starting that early was a very good thing to do.) Anyway, we had four thousand dollars in the building fund, which doesn't sound like much, but one reason we did not disband was because we didn't have any provision in our bylaws about what would happen with any assets we had. And the people from the Pacific Central District who came out advised us to stick with it for that reason.

The other reason was more important. Services had been held on Sunday evenings in all sorts of places, but the Hulses decided that they would offer their home as a place to hold services on Sunday morning, which people are mostly accustomed to as the time to go to church. Beginning sometime in the spring of 1964, that began to happen. They lived on Wesley Drive near that little park that's not far off Keystone. People showed up at their home Sunday morning at probably eleven. And we had R.E., run by Billie Guss, who had a Ph.D. in chemistry herself, a very bright person who was good at running things for kids.

The Fellowship has grown gradually from that point on, and we attended more or less regularly from that time up to the present. We probably have about 150 pledging members now.

The Hulses were critical in turning things around, and they have been extremely generous of their time and money and efforts for the Fellowship ever since. Betty's maiden name is Wyncoop. She comes from a strong Universalist family back in Ohio, and she brought Jim into



Betty and Jim Hulse, flanked by U.U. Fellowship Rev. Gordon McKeenan and his wife. *"The Hulses were critical in turning things around."*

the fold, and both of them have been really important people in the life of the Fellowship ever since that time.

Initially, we had quite small budgets, because we didn't have any employees, and we didn't have a building. We had few expenses, so the building fund kept growing. We held an annual meeting in the spring every year to elect officers and establish a budget, and almost every year, for many years, there was a surplus, which we would put that into the building fund. We had a good treasurer, Jake Gidney, who was an accountant, and he got a good bank, and we were earning decent interest. The building fund kept growing over the years, and people would make

memorial contributions to it sometimes, so it kept it growing along with the church.

Initially, Mary and I were drawn to the Fellowship partially because we met interesting, nice people there, but also because we were getting some religious instruction for our kids. Things went on like that for years and years before I began to change my thinking about religion. I had thought being religious meant that you believed in God, and one of the problems I had was, which god? [laughter] There are lots of them, and there are even religions like Buddhism that don't have a god.

But my idea was that religion had to be theologically based, and I didn't know whether there was a God or not. Nobody's been able to prove that there is. On the other hand, some of the greatest people in history, now and earlier, were firm believers in God—very religious people in that sense. Of course, there are also very dangerous people who believe in God! [laughter] We don't need to go into detail on that in the world of 2004; that's sort of obvious. So I still retain my agnostic position about whether or not there was a supernatural order, and, if so, how you could know anything about it.

Perhaps my skepticism also had something to do with the fact that I'd had some experience with mental illness in my family. (My mother was somewhat disturbed, and my brother developed schizophrenia, which eventually killed him.) The one kind of knowledge that many cultures have claimed is not subject to rational testing is mystic knowledge. If you believe that the supernatural speaks directly to you, there may be no effective way to prove it logically or by experiment or anything else, but there's also no way to disprove it. If somebody tells you, "I had this funny experience on the road to Damascus once," there's no way to say whether that's true or false

by any kind of test known to me. On the other hand, there are lots of people in mental hospitals who hear voices that tell them things that are not true. So I haven't had what I would call a mystical experience in my life, although I believe for many years I've been a religious person. Not a theologically based religious person, but a religious person.

I began to rethink what being religious meant, and I read William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*. It was a very scholarly, knowledgeable work about all kinds of religious experiences, but they were of such a diverse nature, that it's hard to say what they all had in common. How are they all religious, except that they are labeled as such? It seemed to me that what made them religious was that their devotees believed and acted according to realities outside themselves. Being religious means, then, at a most fundamental level, believing in something more important than yourself. I had no problem with that, but I hadn't previously considered that thinking of yourself as essentially the center of the universe was a dangerous thing to do, which I think it is. It's dangerous to be a religious fanatic, but it may be more dangerous not to be religious at all, in this sense, and to think of yourself as the center of the universe. That can lead you to do all kinds of horrible things.

I gradually came to see that I did have a lot of things I believed in beyond myself. My first vivid exposure to, and participation in, a form of racial segregation in the South had been an experience of something that was morally unacceptable to me. I knew I had done the wrong thing. I'd done it inadvertently, but I knew it was wrong as soon as it happened. Reflecting on other, similar things that had happened to me made me realize that I really did believe in a whole set of ideas, moral ideas

about how the world should operate and moral ideas beyond self interest. In that sense, I was religious.

I became active at various times in the leadership in the local Fellowship, and occasionally Mary or I would go to what are called General Assemblies. In 1962 the Unitarians and the Universalists—who had been separate denominations, the Unitarians since the early nineteenth century, the Universalists back into the eighteenth century—merged, and we became the Unitarian Universalist Association, sometimes shortened to "UU's." [laughter]

Technically, the denomination is an organization of churches, not individuals, and the General Assembly is the annual meeting of delegates from churches around the country. I went several times; Mary, less, because they occur in June, and she was usually doing archaeology in the summer. They were really great things. The national association published a proceedings for these general assemblies. One I read included the text of various policy positions that had been taken by General Assemblies in the past. (I will read anything I can see!) I read through these and found that they were closer to what I believe than anything I'd ever seen in one place.

About that time, the denomination adopted a set of purposes and principles, which is not a creed—you don't *have* to believe in them to be a Unitarian Universalist. It stated our fundamental beliefs, and we've added one since then. The statement of purposes and principles also includes sources of religious ideas in our denomination. Those purposes and principles are very powerful things. One of them that expresses my attitude toward racism is that "We believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person." There are also statements about what I regard as universal human rights, not in exactly

the form in which I would put it, but still there. There are also statements about being in favor of peace, and I was a full-fledged pacifist at one time; I remain a partial pacifist.

Then there's a statement that I regard as the fundamental basis of both morality and humans' relationship with nature: that is that we believe in an "interdependent web of all existence, of which we are a part." To my mind, that has two very important meanings. The first is that it is the basis for maintaining grounds for morality if there is no absolute or universal theologically based foundation for moral behavior. The major reason we should be concerned about other human beings is simply because we are all caught up in an interdependent web. This is basically something like Kant's principle, which in effect says that, because we live together, the rules of morality must have something to do with this.

The other part of the interdependent web is acknowledging that human beings are a part of nature, meaning the non-human part of nature. This is the basis for believing in what many people think of as environmentalism. We need to protect endangered species, even if we don't see their usefulness to humans, simply because they play a role in the interdependent web, and we need to be very careful when we do things that interfere with the web for other creatures. So this principle has a very deep and wide meaning.

The closest I've ever come to an epiphany in my life was while I was sitting in my mother's rocker in our living room in our house in Floriston, reading. All of a sudden, it hit me that everything on earth of central importance to people could be placed in just three categories, with some movement between them. There is en-

ergy; there are renewable resources; and there are nonrenewable resources. At a fundamental level, that is a way of seeing that we are caught up in a set of interdependent relationships, which is finite.

So, I don't need to believe that there is a supernatural order. For me, religion is most importantly a set of ideas and practices, not the ritual of Sunday morning. Even though we in the Fellowship don't have a standard ritual like most Christian churches, we do have hymns, responsive readings, sermons, and so forth. All of that is part of it. But what is important about religion is the overarching system of belief and practice, which gives meaning to your life. This is the way I define religion.

Then there is love. To be complete and whole and healthy when mature, humans must receive love and learn to love in their early years. I think that's a fundamental thing about human beings. The ultimate explanation for that is evolutionary theory, or natural selection. If human beings didn't receive love from their parents—not just nutrition and physical needs, but love—there wouldn't be very many people. So you have a reason for advocating love without having to say, "Well, there's a God somewhere that wants people to be loving."

I realized some time ago that I really did believe in a whole bunch of very important things beyond myself, which made it possible for me to think in integrative terms about most of what is happening to me and make sense of it. This was a product, in considerable part, of sharing and learning with other people in a congregation, a denomination . . . and in the wider traditions in the world, which go beyond particular denominations: such as abolitionism and civil rights and women's rights and a concern for the environment, compassion

for the poor, and compassion for laborers who are cogs in an industrial machine These are things I really believe in. To the extent that I can—and it's a very limited extent—I try to live according to these beliefs.

I am a religious person, I think, but I am still an agnostic. I don't talk about that very much, because a number of the people I care greatly for and work with could be upset to learn that I don't believe in a god. The black community here locally, for example—I have a number of friendships there, and I work professionally with them doing research into the history of blacks in Nevada. Most of them are intensely religious, and to them it means theology. I go to their worship services, and I sing along with them occasionally, and I don't say anything that might upset them. By now, many of my black, churchgoing friends know that I'm basically sharing the ritual with them, but they might be upset to learn that I don't have the same understanding that they do of what it means. The same thing with my Catholic friends. I try to stay out of discussions involving abortion, because a lot of Catholics believe ending a pregnancy at any stage is killing a human being, and I'm not going to offend anybody by arguing this with them.

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship has been extremely important in my life for a variety reasons. A lot of my ideas about how to deal with fundamental questions have come out of things I've learned from services or from friends or from reading the literature about Unitarians and Universalists in the past, and so on. And a lot of what I have learned to do, to try to live according to things I believe in, has come from the services in our church.

Now, this is a judgment not everyone will be willing to accept, but I think that Unitarian Universalists,

even though they are not required to believe in the purposes and principles as dogma, are probably more likely to try to follow those principles than, say, the people who believe what I was taught as a boy, the Nicene Creed. The degree to which people actually live according to the Nicene Creed I think that our principles are much more fundamental to what we do, or try to do, acknowledging that human beings are by nature fallible and unable to live up completely to any purposes or principles.

When we put up our first building, the total cost of it was about one-third covered by what we'd saved in the building fund by that time, about seventy thousand dollars. We got a low-interest loan from the national denomination for another seventy, and then the third seventy thousand, roughly, we had to borrow in Reno. We bought a house that was being auctioned by the highway department, and we remodeled it. We had to do much of the work ourselves, and it was nearly three years from the time we bought the house until we moved into it.

Many in the Fellowship helped with the remodeling. The Hulses were very important to the effort, and Isabel and Jerry Kimble, Bill and Beth Isaeff, Jim and Loretta McCormick, Evelyn Dees, Earl and Esther Nicholson, and a number of others. There was a whole bunch of people involved. I happened to be the president of the Fellowship the year we made the decision to buy the land and buy that house, but most of the impetus came from a very good building committee. Sherm Swanson, who's a range specialist in the agriculture school, was the chair of that committee. And we had an architect named Annabeth Koval, who was very knowledgeable about how you did things like that.



Elmer Rusco moving earth at the site of the original Reno Fellowship building, 1978. (Photograph courtesy of Jim McCormick.)

They had a wonderful committee that planned everything properly. They knew enough not to use up all our building fund buying the land, because that would leave us strapped to put a building on it for a long time. So we paid something down on the land and were paying it off as we went along. Then we bought this house, which was only a few blocks away, and had it moved on and set about remodeling it. I thought the fact that we would have to do all this work ourselves might be divisive within the Fellowship, because I knew that some people would do more work than others. That's the way the way the universe is. And it didn't always have to do with how fit they were physically! [laughter] So I thought, "Maybe this will cause some resentment or something." But the decision to do it that way turned out to be the strongest bonding experience we've ever gone through. At one time or another, almost everybody did something, and none of the divisive things that I feared happened. The reverse did. When we finished, we felt it was really our house of worship; it was really our church. Recently, we added on to the building. This time, the



Dedication of the first Reno Unitarian Universalist Fellowship home, 780 Del Monte Lane, 1978. (Photograph courtesy of Jim McCormick.)

addition was so big that we had to have everything done by contractors. We still owe quite a bit of money on it.

Until recently, I was very active in the Unitarian-Universalist Fellowship, serving on committees and as an officer of various kinds. We have a minister now who is a first-rate minister (we had experimented with various other things over the years and hadn't found anybody so good), and I think the Fellowship is going to go on and do well. We will somehow pay off the debt on the most recent expansion to our building and continue to grow, and I think the minister will be with us for a while and will do very well, although we couldn't duplicate that earlier bonding experience.

Some people want certainty from religion, so we have people who come in and leave. They want to have somebody tell them what is true and what they should believe. That's not the way we do things. We have purposes and principles, but nobody is required to adhere to them as a creed. You can't be excommunicated from our church; it's impossible! [laughter] A joke was told Saturday evening on the radio show, *Prairie Home Companion*: "If you have a Unitarian-Universalist congregation, and you want to get rid of a family, what do you do? You burn a question mark on their lawn!" [laughter] There are lots of Unitarian jokes, and most of them reveal something about us.

Our congregation has expanded, but we still have members who won't use the word "church" in connection with it. [laughter] We have humanists nationally, and sometimes the humanist contingent is anti-theological, doesn't want the word "god" or the word "spiritual" used. I don't want to say too many things in a worship service which commit me to stating that I believe in God, but if other people want to, I don't object. And then "spiritual"—I'm not sure what the word means, but it's possible that there is a level of reality that you could call supernatural or spiritual, of which you can't prove the existence or nonexistence. Something like dark matter in the inter-stellar universe. It's possible that the spiritual aspect of the universe is out there somewhere, so if you want to use "spiritual" as "equivalent to religious in orientation," then that's OK with me, too.

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Since I retired, I have been involved in too many good causes. I simply cannot say no! [laughter] I'm an optimist by nature, so if somebody asks me to do something, I start thinking, "Well, what's necessary to do this? It's not that complicated. I've done similar things, and I can do that." Then, of course, I forget all the ramifications of working with other people, and something will always go wrong. Murphy's Law ("If something can go wrong, it will") is indeed one of the laws of social life, and it has not been repealed. I'm always accepting things that take more time than I thought they would.

Perhaps, after I retired I should have concentrated solely on doing my research and writing. Although I got a lot done, I didn't finish some of the major things I wanted to do. I just sent the Nevada State Historical Society a bunch of boxes of material that I had gathered for a book on the modern civil rights movement in the state,

which obviously I'm not going to complete. At least, somebody else can use the materials that I gathered.

One of the principal things I was involved with was the effort to protect Pyramid Lake. I had long been interested in the conflict between the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and other users of Truckee River water over what share of the water should flow into the lake. Indian law is very complicated, and water law is complicated, so I spent some time trying to learn what was going on. Then I published a couple of articles in the *Governmental Research Newsletter* about the Pyramid Lake situation.

In 1982, the person who was then head of the Pyramid Lake tribal fisheries, which stocks the lake with Lahontan cutthroat trout and cui-ui, came to see me on campus, and we had lunch. He asked me if I would have time to help set up a nonprofit group that would help the Pyramid Lake Tribe get some protection so the lake wouldn't dry up, and the fisheries wouldn't die out. I told him, "Well, I'm very sympathetic," and we talked about it. I knew something about it, but I said, "I don't have the time to take that on. I've got all these other things."

Shortly thereafter, the Friends of Pyramid Lake was founded. The people who took the initiative to found it included David Hornbeck, who's a local attorney. He was the first president, for four years, initially, and now he's back as president. I wasn't involved in the organization's creation, but I joined right away. They had a meeting in Center for Religion and Life, right across Virginia Street from the university. The speaker was Bob Pelcyger, who was and still is, the attorney for the Pyramid Lake Tribe on water matters.

Bob is the most well-informed person on water matters in northwestern Nevada that there's ever been—

a very bright attorney, and he knows everything about this. He started as an attorney for NARF, the Native American Rights Fund, and then became the tribal attorney and has been for many years. He has had a lot to do with the successes that the tribe has had in protecting Pyramid Lake since then.

There was a meeting with Bob Pelcyger at the Center for Religion and Life in the spring of 1982, which I attended. I joined at that point, but I wasn't active over the next few years. After I retired in 1986, Dave Hornbeck, the president, said, "Well, I don't have time really to go on with this," and he asked me if I could take over the position. I said yes, and so for the next eight years, I was the president of Friends of Pyramid Lake.

Friends of Pyramid Lake is a small group, although we had a mailing list of over two hundred. (You have to have at least that number to get bulk mailing permits from the post office, but not all were members.) The leadership group has been small from the beginning. It included Dave Hornbeck and JoAnne Peden, who's done some really great things out at Pyramid Lake and elsewhere. Gary Strand, a physician in town who does plastic surgery, has been in from the beginning. Gary put together a very good slide show, the kind with two machines, and it switches back and forth rapidly between images. For years he would go around the schools with his Pyramid Lake show, and it was a great slide show that generated a lot of interest in our cause. All those folks are still board members.

We put out a newsletter, and until we finally ran out of steam, we held a triathlon out at Pyramid Lake every summer to raise funds and attract people to the lake. We figured if you go out and look at the lake, you



Some Friends of Pyramid Lake: (l. to r.) Elmer Rusco, David Hornbeck, and JoAnne Peden.

realize this is a beautiful place worth protecting. We did a few other things; we had some public programs.

I like to think that, by keeping some public attention on the issue, Friends of Pyramid Lake had an indirect role in the process that led to the negotiated settlement that Senator Reid sponsored. We would put on various programs and panel discussions and so forth and so on. Senator Reid decided that a major focus of his second term as United States Senator from Nevada would be to try to solve the northwestern Nevada water problems. He has said that the point when he made that decision was when he was walking through the Reno airport election night, and some reporter caught up with him and asked him, "What's your major focus going to be?" What popped into his mind was, "I think I'll try to get a resolution of the water conflicts in northwestern Nevada."

There could be a lot more to it than that, but I like to think that maybe we'd kept the issue in the public spotlight enough that it was one thing that occurred to

him. Reid followed up and did devote a lot of his time and his staff's time to trying to bring people together on this issue, and basically he succeeded. The farmers at TCID [Truckee-Carson Irrigation District] were part of the original negotiating group, and then they withdrew, because they weren't willing to concede anything, but it turned out not to be critical. The passage of the act took place even though they hadn't participated. The full story of this has not been written up yet, I think. It should be.

I wrote an article on the negotiated settlement giving a little of the background. It involved many different interests and extensive geography. You're talking about two rivers, the Truckee and the Carson, both of which arise in California and flow into Nevada; you're talking about urban needs and some agricultural needs in the Truckee Meadows, the major metropolitan area in northwestern Nevada; you're talking about the Pyramid Lake Paiute tribe and the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone reservation, the folks that have been in the Lahontan Valley for a long time; and you're talking about the farmers in Lahontan Valley. You had all these complicated issues involving fisheries and everything, and this litigation had been going on for decades.

The crucial factor was that each of the major parties wanting to secure water rights on one or the other rivers had previously won something in court. The TCID had the original Orr Ditch Decree. Pyramid Lake had Winters Doctrine rights, but what were they? The initial determination of the Orr Ditch Decree was that the Winters Doctrine rights didn't amount to much. Basically, it was the farmers in the Fallon area—the Lahontan Valley—that got most of the water rights, but that decree also put into concrete water rights that had been acknowledged before there was any law defining or distributing

them in the Truckee Meadows and elsewhere along these two river systems. The Orr Ditch decree, which favored agriculture, didn't really protect Pyramid Lake.

On the other hand, the Pyramid Lake Tribe had won a court decision (in 1973) that under federal law the tribe should have water rights sufficient to preserve Pyramid Lake and the fisheries. That was known as the Gesell decision. That decision didn't specifically spell out just how much water that meant, but it's been the basis for litigation ever since. Initially, it didn't change anything, but it eventually did, because Gesell's ruling brought the Department of the Interior into the controversy on the side of the tribe, and from then on the department was required by law to help restore the fishery. Then, when the Endangered Species Act came along, the tribe asked for endangered species status for the cui-ui and a threatened status for the Lahontan cutthroat trout. (I think this must have been an initiative taken by Bob Pelcyger.) They won that, and they won a right, then, to protect the fisheries by the assignment of water rights at Stampede Dam, one of the dams along the river from the Sierra snowpack to Pyramid Lake.

The tribe had won those two victories, but neither was decisive. And the Orr Ditch decree benefited water users in the Truckee Meadows, and the Lahontan farmers had the Carson River decree, which also supported the farmers. Nobody had it exactly as they wanted it, or had locked things up in the litigation, but everybody had won something. And that is the ideal situation for a negotiated settlement. Everybody had something to gain and everybody had already gained something, but not what they really wanted. This is the ideal situation, but it also took great negotiating skills and great devo-



Cui-ui. (Photograph courtesy of the University of Nevada-Reno Library, Special Collections.)

tion on the part of Reid and his staff to get this all together.

Along with this, a new party developed, the Lahontan Valley Wetlands Coalition, because the environmentalists began to realize that if the outcome of the negotiated settlement was to reduce water being diverted from the Truckee to the Lahontan Valley, one thing that might happen was that a lot of wetlands could get dried up. (A lot of migratory bird populations use this area.) So a coalition was started. Tina Nappe and Rose Strickland and others took the initiative to get a number of different people and groups together to see if something to protect the Lahontan wetlands couldn't be put

into the negotiated settlement during the time that this negotiating process was going on. The Pyramid Lake Tribe showed some interest in that, and Friends of Pyramid Lake did. I would attend, and other people would attend for Friends of Pyramid Lake, and we found we could agree on these kinds of things. So eventually, the negotiated settlement did include water rights for wetlands in Lahontan Valley, which wasn't part of the original idea at all.

Technically, the requirements for the 1990 negotiated settlement act have yet to be completely carried out. People are still arguing over an operating plan for the Truckee River. Using the Truckee as a way of getting enough water to save the fishery at Pyramid Lake presents some problems; the complexity of the issue is considerable. You need water chiefly in the spawning period in the spring, but you must maintain year-round flows so that people fishing the Truckee through a big area, including the Truckee Meadows, can fish anytime they want. You also need to prevent floods and all kinds of other things. Satisfactorily managing the flow of the Truckee has turned out to be the most difficult aspect of the settlement.

Friends of Pyramid Lake was fairly active until several years after the negotiated settlement was passed, right at the end of 1990. It literally passed within the last five minutes of that Congressional session. It had passed the Senate first, and it was on the House unanimous consent calendar for the very last day, along with two other bills. It's an important example of how even something as controversial as water rights can be negotiated effectively. All parties agreed, except TCID, which goes on objecting here and there without any major impact, so far as I can tell. [laughter] But anyway, everybody else

agreed on two rivers in two states involving urban, agricultural, Indian, et cetera uses. Amazing achievement!

Senator Harry Reid deserves an enormous amount of credit for that. I noticed in his campaign for re-election that he doesn't mention it, probably because the average person doesn't remember any of it. But anybody involved with water rights in northwestern Nevada knows the settlement was extremely important to this area of the state.

It looked for decades like the situation at Pyramid Lake was hopeless, but the negotiated settlement saved it. The tribe had to accept a lower lake level than they would have liked—Winnemucca Lake, which used to form east of it by overflow from Pyramid Lake, is not going to return, and so forth. Therefore, there aren't as many wetlands around as there used to be. So the tribe had to compromise on this, but basically, they won the right to have their lake preserved. That's a great achievement.

The settlement also permits some urban growth in the Truckee Meadows. I hope that governments aren't issuing more water rights than there is water, because there's a difference between the legal right and the actual water. Part of the negotiated settlement was that they increased the storage capacity upstream by using the Stampede reservoir and manipulating other things. So everybody won, and that's a great achievement in a very difficult area, and I think that somebody should do a full study on that at some time or other.

We used to run the fundraising triathlon with volunteers from the board and elsewhere, and that got to be a big burden. One piece of evidence that *somebody* watches SNCAT, the television station that reports on city council and city activities, is that a member of our

board went on a SNCAT program, describing Friends and asking if anybody was interested in helping with the triathlon out at Pyramid Lake, and we got a response! [laughter] Suzie Truax, who runs a business that aids other businesses in a variety of different ways, saw this and was interested. So we had a contract with her for several years. She would organize the triathlon, and we would split the money from it with her, and that was very satisfactory. We could do that. Most of us went out there and worked also on the triathlon day, but we had a professional organizing everything.

Suzie's son was a triathlon athlete, and she had some background in this, and she turned out to be a good organizer. She did that for several years, and then she decided that she'd had enough of it. She wasn't making an enormous amount of money, and she decided to quit. So we had to face the question of whether we could continue the triathlon at all, and we realized that we couldn't.

The triathlon had been our major fundraising activity. I used to have a yearly mailing in November to get people in their end-of-year charitable giving, because, for tax purposes, we weren't a 501 (C3) organization according to federal regulations. Off and on, I would do the newsletter, too, but usually we found somebody else to do it. And I would handle the renewal thing, so we had some income coming in regularly from that—if you don't ask people to renew, they don't.

I finally resigned as president of Friends of Pyramid Lake when I got too tired and realized I was spending too much time on it, considering what else I wanted to do. And we couldn't do the triathlon anymore to raise money. So we just sort of put the organization into low gear, and for several years turned out a newsletter a year and did a few other things, but not much. The Friends of

Pyramid Lake is practically dormant now, but we had a meeting a year ago with the board and decided not to disband. We weren't really doing anything, but we had some money in the treasury, and we could support a few things. We support a scholarship program for a student from Pyramid Lake to come to the university, and things like that.

This spring the board had its annual meeting and decided to keep going at this very low speed. We determined to seek permission to join the Nevada Wildlife Federation, which supports other efforts to save desert lakes, including Walker Lake. I assume we have been accepted for that purpose.

19

I was active for a number of years in Common Cause of Nevada. Common Cause was started nationally in 1970 by John Gardner, and not long after that, a Nevada Common Cause group was set up. I joined early on, but I didn't do much of anything until my friend Jim Hulse became the chair of Common Cause in Nevada and asked me to join the board, which I did. For several years I had the job of putting together and getting board approval of a legislative program of Common Cause. We were trying to change the lobbying laws and the campaign finance laws and freedom of information laws, mainly.

Common Cause nationally developed a much wider interest. At one point, it opposed the Vietnam War, which I'm not sure was a sensible thing to do, because that turned off folks who might have agreed on these other things, and it wasn't really directed toward reforming the political system to be more egalitarian and less plutocratic.

I spent a number of years on the board. Leola Armstrong, who was the Secretary of the Senate for many years, got into Common Cause when she retired, and then became our executive director. I don't know how we got enough money—probably from the national office—to pay her something of a salary. So Common Cause of Nevada grew and developed during this period, and I had a little bit to do with it .

Joe Robertson was a member of the board for years and one of its most active. What I worked for most importantly was something Joe agreed with me on, and that is that the state should put out a voter's handbook. California, Washington, Oregon, and Alaska—it seems to be a Western thing—have published, at state expense, documents that go to every registered voter giving the text of propositions that are going to be on the ballot, and arguments for and against them, and information about candidates. Candidates can submit their photograph and anything they want to say about what they want to do, and that goes to every voter in the state before the primary and before the general election. I still think that would be a good thing to do.

One of the reasons we have low voting participation is that people are so damned busy. The proportion of women who are employed—rather than who work in the home for no pay—has gone up in the last few decades, so people are busier; but also, more and more people have to work two jobs to have enough money just to survive on. So they don't have time to follow elections and complicated propositions and really figure out who the candidates are. The state could help with that.

Joe and I, supported by the Common Cause board, were the ones pushing a voter's handbook. We worked for years to try to get somewhere on that. We thought we

had Frankie Sue Del Papa on board when she was secretary of state, but at the crucial moment, the secretary of state's office wouldn't go and advocate it before the appropriate committees. We didn't succeed in that, and nobody's pushing it at the moment, that I know of.

I worked with the Common Cause board for several years. At one point, Jim Hulse asked me if I would be a candidate to chair it at the state level, and I had to say no, that I couldn't see taking on another thing! [laughter] And poor Jim is still providing the leadership of Common Cause and doing a great job.

I served on the board of Washoe Legal Services, which was set up by the 1964 Poverty Act. They provide legal services—excluding certain categories like divorce—to low-income people. It's kind of like public defenders on the civil side. I thought that was a good thing, and so I served on the board of that for several years, and then realized, as with so many other things, that I was spending too much time on it.

I was asked to attend a meeting of a group that was trying to organize the Truckee Meadows Habitat for Humanity. I had read about the national group, of course. It originated as part of Koinonia, which is a communal enterprise about five miles east of Plains, Georgia, where President Carter came from. Then it was spun off to Americus, a town just a little bit further east, and it became a separate organization. I thought it was a really great idea. It tries to help folks become homeowners, folks who don't have enough income to do it in a regular way. The "partnership family," as the recipients are called, contributes so many hours of labor toward building their house, and you have Habitat volunteers help-

ing. You have money donated to help reduce the cost of the house, and you don't charge the partnership family interest. They do have a mortgage, because you have to recover some money—it's too expensive to build houses purely with contributions. But you offer opportunities for low-income people through these various elements.

I liked everything about Habitat. It appeals to liberals and conservatives, to people of all backgrounds. So I was a board member for several years, and I did several useful things, I think:

From the beginning we needed an office, because it takes a lot of work to design and build houses. I called up Bill Thornton and told him I was involved now with Habitat for Humanity, and asked him if he knew of any office space we could have. He knew all about Habitat and approved of it. One of his sons, who was in college at the time, had just spent a summer helping build Habitat houses. Bill said, "Well, I think I can help you out." Bill was an officer of the Cal-Neva Casino, and the Cal-Neva owned the First National Bank Building at First and Virginia. The Cal-Neva offered Habitat a free office in the building, and we had one there for years. At first it was just three small rooms close together, but it gave us space.

I was never very good as an academic entrepreneur, but when I got on the Habitat board, I realized the only way we were ever going to get enough money to actually start building houses was to write grants. So I wrote a lot of grant proposals. I figured out once that the total amount of money that came in from grants was about $400,000 over a period of several years. It was mostly because of the popularity of the Habitat idea, but I also wrote decent applications. I got fairly good at it.

The guy who was in charge of the federal VISTA program in Reno was interested in Habitat, so I talked

with him, and he decided we could get a couple of VISTA volunteers to work for us. I wrote the grant proposals for that for a couple years, and the arrangement turned out to be crucial to our success. In order to apply for grants, you have to have audited books. In order to have your books audited, you must have somebody who knows how to do the books in the first place. And one of the VISTAs we got was a guy who had worked for IBM for years and years before he retired, and he knew how to do them. The Hawkins Foundation provided us with computers—that was also a grant proposal. And the VISTA volunteer installed books on the computer which satisfied accountants so that they would audit us so we could get more money.

I think I played a significant role in the advance of Truckee Meadows Habitat for Humanity, but I finally wore out. I realized I was spending more time on it than I should, and I wanted to get back to doing my scholarly work, so I quit. I didn't think of myself as one of the founders of the group, because I came on after several people had been working to found it, but my signature, apparently, is on the initial bylaws. There was some kind of ceremony awhile back thanking the founders of the group, including Bill and Barbara Thornton, and I was on the list. I don't think of myself as a founder, but I did play a role in Habitat for some years.

I had developed some abilities over the decades at helping nonprofits—different kinds for very different purposes, but I played leading roles in some of them. Every time I did, I learned something useful, and I began to acquire contacts throughout the community. Another group that I worked with briefly was Friends of Rancho San Rafael.

Clark Santini was Jim Santini's brother, and they were descended from Walter E. Clark, president of the University of Nevada in the 1920s, and his son, the noted author, Walter Van Tilburg Clark. Clark Santini was one of my first students at the University of Nevada. Clark and several other people, chiefly Ginny Kersey, who is a member of our Fellowship, led the successful attempt to get Rancho San Rafael purchased as a public park for the community. They worked on it hard for years and founded Friends of Rancho San Rafael.

They kept running into difficulties. People at one point wanted to put a Raley's store inside the park. They thought, "Well, we got all this land" Of course, some of it was still undeveloped. A lot of it was pasture, and it has a whole bunch of buildings and wonderful things around, and people figured, "Well, this is vacant land. Develop it." I think the Nevada Mining Association even wanted to set up a historic, but operating, stamp mill on the grounds. Well, I don't know that I've ever heard a stamp mill operating, but the neighbors wouldn't have appreciated that. [laughter]

People kept coming up with weird notions of what you should do with the park, and the Friends of Rancho San Rafael kept fighting back, and they always won, fortunately. At one point Clark brought over a whole bunch of documentation and other material about one of these battles. (According to the newspaper, the May Foundation was behind this particular one—they funded not only the May Museum, but the arboretum and other things there.) Clark had me read what he had brought, and he said, "Could you write an op-ed piece about this to help us save Rancho San Rafael?" I looked it over, and we talked about it, and I agreed with the Friends' position, so I wrote one.

I got on the board of the Friends, but I didn't do very much. Peggy Lear Bowen was the president of Friends of Rancho San Rafael for years, and she's another member of the Fellowship, and I knew her. When the twentieth-fifth anniversary of the successful vote for the bond issue that made Rancho San Rafael possible came up, she asked me if I would write something for that event. The Friends were planning an event and a pamphlet with the history of Rancho San Rafael in it. I said yes, and then what I came up with was a much more extensive study of the history of the park. It was too long to publish in the *Nevada Historical Society Quarterly*. So I raised money again. The Thorntons and Maya Miller helped kick in to pay some of the costs, and we published it ourselves. Then I ran out of steam. The Friends were doing just fine, anyway. Michael Robinson, who ran for Reno mayor against Bob Cashell in 2002, heads the group now.

20

I first thought about capital punishment a long time ago, while I was in the army. I read everything I could. I read Camus on capital punishment; I read things by Hugo Bedau, who was an American philosopher who wrote a lot on that subject. I read Dostoevski, who knew what it was like to be standing up expecting to be executed and then getting reprieved. The beginning premise, when you're thinking about capital punishment, should be "Thou shalt not kill." In other words, you need to have a good, positive reason to kill somebody, especially when that person is under the complete control of the state.

I struggled with this. I tried to find data to support or refute official policy. Everywhere I looked, there was no evidence that capital punishment did any of the good things that people said it did. The defenders of it still said, "Well, it helps reduce murder and the other terrible crimes that people get executed for." But if you look at

the evidence, there isn't any. There are twelve states in the United States that have abolished capital punishment and thirty-eight others who haven't, and the murder rate is twice as high in the capital punishment states on average. That's consistent over decades.

Since the supreme court redid things in the 1970s, not just everybody can be executed—in fact, only a minority of people who commit murder are sentenced to death, and theirs are especially heinous crimes. The court requires that if convicted of the crime, before they can be sentenced to death, you have to consider aggravating circumstances, things that were especially bad on the part of the murderer, and then mitigating circumstances, things that might help explain why they weren't responsible for this. In other words, it's a *subset* of murderers, a minority of murderers, who are even eligible for capital punishment. But your average murderer does not, in a systematic way, think, "Well, do I want to do something that aggravates the crime and therefore increases my potential to be executed? And what potentially mitigating circumstances might I take advantage of?" They don't think that. No.

Following World War II, as European countries began gradually to abolish capital punishment, the murder rate apparently didn't rise. If it had, these countries surely would have gone back and reinstated the death penalty. They haven't done that. All of Europe has now abolished capital punishment. In fact, you can't be a member of the European Union if you still practice capital punishment.

I thought all this through sometime back in the 1950s, but I didn't try to do anything about it. It was just personal philosophy. There was a time in the 1970s when Ann and Bill Scott and Myra Soifer, rabbi of the syna-

gogue in northwest Reno, and some other people and I got together and were trying to figure out, "What can we do to work on moving away from capital punishment?" I think Myra ended up going to visit people on death row as a result of that, but not much else came of it.

Then, about three years ago, interest in capital punishment picked up around the country. I was visiting my son Frank and his family in Arlington, Virginia, and I read something in the Washington Post that I had never thought about. A Catholic order of nuns had this idea that people who were opposed to capital punishment could sign and notarize a document, saying, "If I am murdered, I do not want my murderer killed also." I thought, "Well, yes. This is a positive step that you can take." It may not have a legal effect, but it is something. My wife Mary and I have signed such documents.

Other people were getting interested because of these Innocence Projects set up around the country. I don't know how many there are, but the one that's had the most impact is the one at Northwestern University, which led to a moratorium on the death penalty in that state. They found that something like half of the folks who were on death row were not just illegally convicted, they were actually innocent of the crimes. They found other people who confessed to the crimes, and the confessions were accepted by judges; or they did DNA testing and discovered that the blood or semen or whatever that had been found at the scene and tied to the perpetrator wasn't from the person who was convicted.

So the Innocence Projects began showing that there were actually innocent people on death row. There are still people who argue that you can't prove that innocent people have been executed. But, of course, if you have a significant group of folks who have only recently

been found to be innocent because people looked into their cases and applied new technology, that means in the past there must have been lots of other people. It is just a fact that once people are executed, nobody except for the Innocence Projects continues investigating their cases to find out whether or not they truly are guilty.

When the Supreme Court reordered everything, temporarily creating a moratorium on the death penalty in the whole country, and then setting down the rules that all states have to follow to reinstitute capital punishment, they put up new procedural protections; but those are not the same thing as an independent investigation to find out whether this person is in fact guilty, which these Innocence Projects provided.

I began to read about the Innocence Projects. Then, in the Fellowship, I got a task force of the social action committee started. (I've always been active in the social action committee) We got a task force set up to study capital punishment. We had several meetings and discussed various kinds of issues, and it turned out that most of our people were opposed to capital punishment.

Then there is a very good group called the Life, Peace, and Justice Commission of the Catholic Diocese of Reno. Its members are people like Father Charles Durante, or "Father Chuck," as everybody calls him, who is one of the great people I know. And Ellie Hays, who is a peace activist. (She used to be a dealer at one of the casinos, I think, before she retired.) Ellie goes down every year and pickets the U. S. Army's School of the Americas that they say used to train Latin American militaries to do torture and things like that. She's been arrested numerous times for that, and she's really a wonderful person.

Well, the Life, Peace, and Justice Commission sponsored a public meeting at Little Flower church down on Kietzke and Plumb on capital punishment, and a number of us from the Fellowship went. We found we were really quite compatible with them. The bishops of the Catholic Church some years ago officially came out against capital punishment, and the Catholic Church in general has been against capital punishment for a long time.

After that, I got the idea that maybe we could assemble some local people and start doing something against capital punishment. So I got people to come to an initial meeting at the Gold 'N Silver café, down on Fourth Street and Vine. Maybe a dozen people came from several groups, including the Friends. So we started holding regular meetings, and we switched to the Friends meeting hall. They managed to get a building right on the edge of Dick Taylor Park—the Friends Church is right next to it. We started holding our meetings regularly and started taking action.

That evolved into the creation of a state organization, the Nevada Coalition Against the Death Penalty, mainly because Nancy Hart began to take the leadership of the organization. Nancy is another member of the Fellowship. She was an attorney who, for many years, was a half-time employee with the attorney general's office in Nevada, working on protecting women against violence, trying to improve things in that area. For years, she has been the Amnesty International representative in Nevada on a volunteer basis. She's a wonderful person, very bright and very dedicated.

After awhile it became clear that Nancy was willing to take the leadership in this group, so we made some

efforts to see if we could get something going in Las Vegas. I contacted some people I knew in the Unitarian-Universalist Congregation down there—that's their present name—that was formed about the same time as the one up here. Then it turned out that there were a number of other folks down there in the law school, and especially in the public defender offices. They organized a local group, and we set up and incorporated a statewide organization, and that organization has had some impact. I helped to get it started, but almost all of it was Nancy and these other lawyers, plus the ACLU. Nancy did an enormous amount of it.

We managed in the 2001 legislature to get an interim study of the death penalty, all aspects of it, headed by Sheila Leslie, who is one of the best members of the Assembly. I think we had some impact in getting her to agree to do this. A number of interim hearings were held that were very well attended, and our group helped provide a wide picture of the whole issue to Sheila and the staff of the Legislative Counsel Bureau. The interim committee came up with recommendations, and in the 2003 legislature a number of these were passed. A couple of the most important were not, but a number of these were passed.

So we made some progress at reducing capital punishment in this state. In the past, the legislature had considered this, and there were people opposed to capital punishment who made statements and efforts to get it abolished in Nevada. But this was the first time we got organized on a statewide basis, and I think we've had some impact. It's not clear what we're going to be able to do from now on, because public opinion in the state doesn't seem to be shifting our way anymore. I was the

secretary of the organization for several years, but with the progress of my ALS, I have had to resign this position.

I tend to over-involve myself. If somebody asks me, "Can you do this?", I think, "Well, this won't take long. I'll do it." This is the way you get sucked into a wider organizational obligation, and I spent far more of my retirement time doing good works than I had intended! [laughter] Oh, but much of it related to some of my deepest held beliefs, those about environmentalism and racial justice. In retirement, I was working, at one time or another, for Friends of Pyramid Lake and Habitat for Humanity and Common Cause and Washoe Legal Services and Friends of Rancho San Rafael simultaneously. And I was also serving in responsible positions in the Fellowship and working to eliminate the death penalty in Nevada.

I'd be doing all these things at once, but I have a tremendous capacity to focus my attention, and when I'm working on one particular thing, hardly anything can distract me. I can work effectively, and then I can shut that off and go do something else. I also took a speed reading course in my forties. I keep elaborate records on everything, which fills the house with paper [laughter], but that enables you to keep track of what you're doing. You don't have to rely just on your memory.

Coni Taylor founded the Northern Nevada Black Cultural Awareness Society, and I've been a member of that from its beginning. The organization works against discrimination on the basis of race, and they also have a program focusing on educating children from minority communities and developing an interest among children

in education. They have an annual banquet which attracts hundreds of people and raises enough funds for them to operate during the year. That's been a very good organization. I've been supportive of that. I always go, but haven't become organizationally involved with them.

At one point during my retirement I got a grant from the state humanities committee to do a traveling exhibit on black history in the state, because there was so little available. We also published two tabloid newspapers, with photographs and brief histories of prominent African-Americans in the state's history, especially people currently living. That showed very clearly that there are people in the black community with high levels of skill and high levels of community involvement. Part of the prejudice remaining against black people in the state arises from the fact that not everyone is aware of these achievements, and the Nevada Black History Project was attempting to raise that awareness.

I didn't realize how long it was going to take me to get my research and writing done and get something in print. It took me something like twenty-five years to turn out a book on the history of race and law in Nevada, from 1861 to 1943. I think I'm finished with that. I hope that the University of Nevada Press will publish it, but there's not much that I can do about it anymore. I think it's in good shape. They want to cut it down a little bit, because it's too long, but other than that, I think it will be published.

That book was to be the background for the book on the modern civil rights movement in Nevada that I *really* wanted to write. The main impetus for the modern civil rights movement in the state came, of course, from the black community, mostly from the NAACP in Reno and in Las Vegas and in Hawthorne. Other people,

many of them not black, joined the cause. Some very important public officials, like Grant Sawyer, already belonged or joined when they got into government. I wanted to write about all that, and this other book was supposed to be preparation for that, but it took me over twenty years to do the first one. [laughter]

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Rousseau says in the middle of *The Social Contract*, "All of my ideas are consistent, but I cannot express them all at once." I don't compare myself intellectually with Rousseau; but also, I'm not quite as disturbed as he was, according to his confessions. [laughter] But I did realize not too long ago that most of the intellectual problems that I've been working on in my research and writing, and in some of my community service, really do fit into some consistent patterns. It began some years ago with an attempt to understand what some people call the "exceptionalism problem:" why is the government of the United States different from that of other Western European governments, of which it is merely one kind? In other words, beginning several centuries ago, Western European people did several important things that have shaped the whole world up to this point. One was creating nation states. Nation states didn't re-

ally exist before, and they came out of Europe, and now they're the model for almost everybody in the world.

They also developed constitutional democracies. So the roots for American constitutional democracy clearly go back to Europe, more to Britain than elsewhere, but the same basic titling and some of the ideas actually go back to the Greeks and their wonderfully creative period. Anyway, we're not unique. Sometimes extreme nationalists in the United States or people who are simply ignorant think that the United States is the model of democracy or freedom—a shining light on a hill and all of that nonsense. But no, we are simply one variant of the constitutional democracies developed in the Western World, in the modern era, in the era of nation states. But we differ in several important respects.

One of the intellectual problems that I've been concerned with for many years, and on which I think I've made some progress, is explaining why this difference. In most of the world where constitutional democracies have developed, the basis is the parliamentary pattern. Actual governance is by political parties, and you have a popularly-elected, democratically-elected legislative body, usually the lower body—in England, the House of Commons. And the government is the coalition of parties that has a majority in that house, and it has full authority to govern within the constitution. But we in the United States have this system of divided authorities, which is anything but the best possible system. It's aberrant, and it has problems. It was adopted because the framers of the constitution didn't really want what we now consider to be democracy. They were trying to prevent it. So that's a problem.

Then, in terms of public policy, there are all kinds of ways in which the United States differs from most other

Western and other democracies around the world. One is health insurance. We have, in many ways, a first-rate health system in this country, but because we don't have any national health insurance or any equivalent, millions and millions of people are without health insurance. And this is a problem solved decades ago by almost all Western European countries. So we have something like forty million people who don't have health insurance now, and a lot of their health needs aren't taken care of by public health, genuine socialized medicine. They're living in the richest country in the world, and one with the best medical system, without proper medical care. And we've tolerated this for decades.

Another problem is that we have a safety net for people who, for various reasons, can't earn enough to get by, or even avoid malnutrition, but the safety net is full of holes. It's not comprehensive the way it is in many European countries. For example, I learned in the 1970s that most constitutional democracies at that time had systems of family allowances. When people are raising young children, they often have economic costs that occur at the beginnings of their careers when their incomes are low, and so most other democracies have systems of public subsidies to help people raise children. That's unheard of in this country. I'd be willing to bet that only 2 percent of the American public has ever even heard of these things. Also, in much of Europe, because of the changing nature of the economy, workers must retrain. Much of the obligation for this retraining is assumed by governments on the theory that the workers are not responsible for the fact that people don't use many buggy whips anymore.

One more thing: the rest of the world is in the process of abandoning capital punishment, but we are

not. The only countries that have it now are countries like China, which still has an oppressive regime, Iran, which has a fanatical Muslim government, a few other Muslim countries, and the United States.

So, why are we different from the other Western Democracies? Democracy, in the modern sense, is possible only if you have a constitutional order, which means you have a government that is restrained institutionally and in practice, usually by a written constitution. There are some exceptions, and Britain is one. They still don't have a written constitution, but they do have a constitutional order, and their rulers are restrained by it. The most important restraints are protections for civil liberties, or what I prefer to think of as universal human rights. We get confused about that in this country, and many people don't see it.

The starting point of my thinking is that all people have rights that ought to be protected against infringement by their government. The fundamental base for constitutionalism, the most important base, is that the government should protect the constitutional order in some fashion—it should protect its subjects, not its citizens, because citizenship is not really important. That's a side issue. Government should protect its subjects against violation of rights by the government itself and by private persons, as a necessary condition for democracy.

The idea of universal human rights comes out of the Enlightenment. In our case, the first paragraph of the Declaration of Independence states "all men" have these rights, and at that time they meant men. They weren't thinking of women as having rights, but there's been an enlargement of the notion of universal human rights from that beginning. And there should be.

Locke says in his second treatise, "The aim of law is not to abolish or restrain, but to preserve and enlarge freedom." That is, in my view, what's going on. The central requirement for constitutional democracy is a sufficient consensus within the electorate behind the current idea of what individual rights are. These should be protected, although they evolve and progress over time. The content of rights enlarges.

There is hardly anything more important to democracy than this pattern of beliefs about human rights, because they are the foundation of constitutionalism. They are the necessary requirements for democracy, logically and in actual practice. The justification for those rights varies from person to person. Many people see God—whatever God means to them—as having created these rights, and that's why people have them. But, of course, the problem with that is that people perceive different things about the supernatural order, and not everybody sees the supernatural order at all; and if you do, if there is a God, well, what particular things derive from that?

I prefer to think that the justification for individual rights is, in Jefferson's words in the Declaration, "self-evident," in the sense that reasonable persons of different backgrounds should be able to agree on these rights by a process of discussion and accommodation and evolution and so forth. That is roughly what has happened in all countries that are constitutional democracies—that's a necessary thing before they can become democracies. You can't establish the truth of assertions about universal human rights absolutely, but there are proximate truths that can be derived by human reason. In some ways I'm still back with the Enlightenment on this. [laughter]

Unfortunately, both in the American experience and in general Western European thinking, there is an alternative set of ideas that has been widely believed and acted upon, which is in conflict with the universal human rights model, and that is racism. The Western European nations of the last few centuries created the state system and constitutional democracy, but they also went out and conquered much of the rest of the world at one time or other. I still remember those world maps I saw when I was a kid, and they usually had light red or a dark pink for British possessions. And you looked at a map—about half the world was that color, because the British government at its peak did control vast areas of the world. Well, since World War II, that's largely receded, but it shaped the modern world, and especially countries of English origin have engaged in this expansionism, as I prefer to call it. (Some people call it imperialism, but that word has a more restricted meaning in many cases.)

The British, especially, created one justification for conquering everybody else by inventing the notion that there are essential biological differences between groups of people, and that these are differences of ability and capacity to enjoy rights. A racist system is one in which people say other groups of people have different characteristics because of their race. You have inferior and superior people, and, of course, we're the superior people—Europeans or English-oriented; Americans are superior people. (Anyone who doubts the strength and breadth of this white racism should examine Teddy Roosevelt's *Winning of the West* and Winston Churchill's *History of the English-Speaking Countries*.)

So we went out, and we conquered native peoples of all kinds and often exterminated them. We built our economy in the Caribbean, the American South, and

some other places, on slave labor from Africa, and we imported cheap labor from Asia, initially Chinese. All of this was justified because of the racist pattern of belief. And my view is that the racist explanation, which justifies discrimination in this country, is an alternative model to the human rights model.

The only other person I've found that adopts my viewpoint is Gary Gerstle, who wrote *American Crucible*. Instead of arguing, as did Gunnar Myrdal, that the United States was not living up to a single American creed, Gerstle acknowledges that there was also a white racist American creed to which people *were* adhering. In Myrdal's book *An American Dilem*ma, published in the 1940s, he argued that American racist behavior was a failure of Americans to live up to national ideals, but this is incorrect! Of course people never entirely live up to their ideals, but what Myrdal did not understand is that there has been, from the beginning, an alternative racist creed, which *was* followed.

This set of white racist ideals has been there from the early years of European expansionism. The French had less of a problem with this, apparently. And in some ways, Spain and Portugal had less of a problem with racism than we do. But societies planted by the English have more of a problem. Anyway, in the United States we've had competing ideas of what it means to be an American, of what our central values are. The human rights model is in competition with a racist model.

I came to that conclusion partly by studying the history of race in law in Nevada. My work has been largely focused on Nevada, because I find it easier to work with facts intertwined with theory in a small state, where, until recently, anyway, you had a relatively small number of people, and the documentation wasn't impossible for one

person to deal with. I haven't done everything I wanted to do involving Nevada, unfortunately, and I won't have time to do it now.

When Nevada became a distinct political entity (the Territory of Nevada in 1861), the legal pattern was just overwhelmingly and systematically racist. There was implicitly a division between white and nonwhite in law. Nobody ever defined those terms in statutes, but whites had all the rights—white males. (There was also gender discrimination here.) By law, nonwhites could not vote, and they couldn't marry whites. They couldn't go to public schools, unless there was a segregated school provided for them. It was a systematic pattern. This is important—they couldn't even testify against whites in either civil or criminal cases, with the odd exception that the Chinese were not included in the ban on testimony in civil cases. The nonwhites were stated by law to be—with different terms identifying them—blacks, Indians, and Chinese.

Nevada's society was systematically white racist, and it's inconceivable that the white males who elected the people who wrote these laws didn't believe in the principles represented by this system. How could it exist if they didn't really believe in it? This was more than just a little failure to live up to ideals—this was an alternative pattern.

There's been a lot of national literature on how the defenders of slavery in the South elaborated ideologies to justify it. There are also elaborate ideologies to justify white racism. If you look at the nation, of course, it was still permitting slavery when Nevada became a separate territory—the federal Constitution protected it in a variety of ways. Then you had the racist naturalization law of 1790, the first law that was passed on naturalization. This law contained a provision that in order to be-

come a naturalized citizen of the United States, you had to be free and white. Not only could you not be a slave, but also you had to be white. Congress modified that in 1870 as part of Reconstruction to specifically state that persons of African descent could become naturalized. But they also left the word "white" in it, because they did not want Chinese to become naturalized citizens. This was discussed specifically in the Senate when they were passing this. That "white" provision in our naturalization law didn't disappear until the McCarran Act in 1952. It lasted that long.

So, rather than a failure to live up to a single model, expressions of white racism are part of an alternative pattern, contrasted with the human rights model, of what it means to be American. Lots of people don't want to hear that. I said some of this when I published my book on black history in Nevada in 1975. In this book I didn't make the more general argument, but I noted the pattern of Nevada law that I've outlined above. I've just sent a book manuscript, describing the history of Nevada law on race from 1861 to 1943, to the University of Nevada Press, which I hope they will publish. The book concludes in 1943, because that was the year that the exclusion of Chinese from the United States ended. During the period between 1861 and 1943, the nonwhite group that caused the most changes in white society, that questioned their status, was the Chinese, and prior to this book, no one has noted that point.

The Civil War produced a movement to abandon white racism as an alternative model in the North, and they tried to impose that in the South—unsuccessfully at first. In the 1869 Nevada legislature, a constitutional amendment was proposed to eliminate from the Nevada constitution the word "white" in the suffrage clause, to

let all nonwhites vote; there was also a women's suffrage amendment proposed. That movement came to a crashing halt in Nevada in 1869 and 1870 because of the Chinese issue. There was an incident in Unionville in which white miners drove the Chinese out of town. Republicans in the legislature proposed redress and protection for the rights of the Chinese, and the result was that the Republicans lost in the 1870 election.

What was going on in Nevada was a version of what was going on at the national level—namely, not an argument over living up to national ideals, but an argument over what those national ideals were. Were they the human rights model, or the white racist model? Why is the political system of the United States different from that of any European nation, out of which we got the basic ideas and the fundamental institutions of constitutional democracy? I think it is at least partly because the racial situation within the United States was different than it was in early European nations.

As the European nations expanded, they took over much of the rest of the world, and in a number of places you had what somebody has called "settler societies," where families from the home country come in and displace or kill the native population. So you've got a society which is a variant of the home society. That's our case. We didn't, fortunately, exterminate all Native Americans, although there were small incidents of genocidal behavior on our part. But during this period, there wasn't a big introduction of people of color from around the world into the European nation from which this expansion had occurred.

In this country, you had a people who were seen by Euro-Americans in racial terms. Our law acknowledged the so-called "Indians" as separate, sovereign so-

cieties. In fact, they were called nations in early Supreme Court opinions—Chief Justice John Marshall's opinions in the Cherokee cases coming out of Georgia. They were called nations, and it was admitted that they had been self-governing on roughly the same status as European nation states, with some important exceptions. So the Indians, from that point on, had a unique legal position in American law, although it's not spelled out in the Constitution. They are semi self-governing societies. They have sovereignty, the ability to establish and run their own governments, and therefore to preserve their own cultures as much as they can. And there's no other minority group in the United States that has that kind of status.

Amazingly, this has survived in some form up to the present, and this arrangement represents a partial exception to the universal human rights model that our nation avows to follow. Congress passed the Indian Civil Rights Act in 1968. It said that Indians had liberties against their own tribal governments, and it spelled out what these were. However, it didn't simply say that Indian people shared the rights enumerated in the Bill of Rights of the U. S. Constitution. Instead, it spelled out what liberties they had, and these took partial account of the fact that Native American societies had different cultural standards from the Western European model. For example, the 1968 law does not include a prohibition on the establishment of religion, and the Pueblos and at least some Hopi villages still have societies which are basically theocracies. The rulers are actually non-elected religious leaders, and they appoint (or anoint) the political leaders.

A good bit of my theoretical thinking over several decades has revolved around ways of amending the ma-

jor theorist who was dealing with this exceptional problem in an effective way, and that is Louis Hartz. Hartz developed a theory that the United States is different from Britain, especially, and other Western countries, because in the settlement from those countries, the entire class system of Europe was not transplanted across the Atlantic. Particularly, the aristocracy did not come over. Because you did not have an aristocracy in America, you didn't have a peasantry. You had a lot of poor people, who were working on the land and taking over Indian land and then becoming landowners themselves, but they weren't peasants. They didn't have the social or legal position of the peasantry of Europe. So the class system brought over from Europe was overwhelmingly middle class in one sense, because you didn't have two of the important classes that you had in Europe. That's Hartz's thesis, which I think is sound.

The ridiculous notion today that there's only one class in the United States, the middle class (and maybe an "underclass") is a derivation from this set of conditions. If you lack the classes at the top and the bottom of the European system, then it is very easy, with the rise of democratic ideology, to proclaim universal suffrage for white males. That's what you had in Nevada from the beginning, and in most other states at that time, and that was somewhat ahead of Europe. So Americans thought of themselves as more democratic, because their class system was less obvious and oppressive than it was in Europe. We have always thought of ourselves as more democratic, in spite of the racist aspect of our history, than Europeans. But we've had a dark side, which is the way we treat racial minorities, and I think it comes from an ideology of racism and not solely from self-interest,

because self-interest could have produced different patterns.

If we hadn't seen Indians and Africans in racial terms, but as simply culturally different from us, we might have worked out more accommodating relations. There might have been more intermarriage, which would begin to break down the barriers, and so forth. There wasn't intermarriage, because they were seen as biologically very different and inferior. You might rape them, in effect, as a lot of slave owners did, but you wouldn't intermarry with them, and the offspring of unions between slave owners and slaves were slaves by birth. In America, racism shaped the encounter between Europeans and non-Europeans from the very beginning.

The civil rights movement took an enormously long time, and it was an enormously difficult process before we finally got some actual movement in *Brown v. Board of Education* and then the civil rights laws passed at the national level and then in most states. But the civil rights movement represents the triumph of universal human rights ideology over racist ideology. There is still lots of de facto racism, but racists by ideology are now a very unpopular minority: if neo-Nazis or some other group like that want to hold a demonstration, they have to be protected by the police, which tells you quite a bit.

So now we have a situation in which most people believe in the human rights model as the basis for the American political system. Most white people don't recognize there are any problems remaining in actually overcoming racism, but everybody agrees on an ideological level. That's new in American history. That model didn't become dominant until the 1960s, roughly . . . and in

some ways it was the 1970s before that became the dominant model.

Louis Hartz did not notice that racism was a problem. Hartz and his followers talked about the European class system and the fact that people came to think we didn't even have a class system, but they didn't notice that on the other side was the problem of racism. Often, nonwhites, such as the Chinese, were seen as threats to the white population, because most of them came from societies that weren't as fully industrialized and as developed as our society was. They would work for less than other people to advance themselves. So they've been seen by the white working class, until relatively recently, as a threat to its living standards. This was a unifying force within the Euro-American population which thought of itself as white.

One reason the United States is different from Western Europe in terms of government policy is that organized labor is weaker here than it is in many European countries. And one reason it's weaker is the racist problem. With occasional exceptions, until this began to change with the rise of the CIO in the 1930s, American labor was racist. There was a brief period toward the end of the nineteenth century when the Knights of Labor were very anti-Chinese, but accepted black workers. The A. F. of L. leader, Samuel Gompers, was opposed to racial discrimination, but he lost an election over that issue and became racist and remained racist to the end, because he realized that he didn't have any choice if he wanted to continue as head of the A. F. of L.

Organized labor was prejudiced against blacks until it began to change in the 1930s. Consequently, during the big black exodus from the South to the North, beginning in World War I and shortly thereafter, blacks

were perfectly willing to accept jobs when there was a strike going on. The steel strike of the early 1920s was broken essentially by black strike breakers who didn't have anything to lose. These were jobs that they could hold, and organized labor was not their friend. So the labor movement was weakened, I believe, by racism in very complex ways that I don't understand fully. That's one of the reasons why labor is weaker in our politics than it is in most European countries.

It's also weaker because a lot of people who are working class don't think of themselves as working class. They think of themselves as middle class. And they think that they might make it big themselves someday, even though what they're doing at the time is manufacturing, which is disappearing, unfortunately, in this country. Even though they're not doing anything very skilled, they think, "Well, I might." The American dream, in terms of economic development, has permeated the working class, so they don't even think of themselves as working class, which, of course, weakens their willingness to support unions and other working-class organizations.

The AFL-CIO several times contemplated trying to establish a national labor newspaper, which would give labor's point of view, and they've never been able to get it off the ground. That is partly because workers don't think of themselves as working class anymore. And this is partly because of the things Hartz talked about, but partly also because of racism, in my opinion.

One of the consequences of the new immigration that began late in the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century was that, in Nevada, the definition of what "white" and "non-white" meant changed radically and illogically. As folks began to come into Nevada from southern and eastern Europe, they met negative re-

sponses. In the Ely area, especially, where there was the biggest influx of such folks (to work in the Nevada Consolidated Copper operations), they were considered to be not white. Initial reaction was that the Greeks weren't white. In the Ely-McGill area, the "Austrians," who were folks from Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro, and other minority states in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, were referred to as not white. Kids would throw rocks at "Austrian" workers as they went home, as they had thrown rocks at Chinese workers going home back in the nineteenth century.

None of this makes any sense at all, but then race itself doesn't make any sense. Of course, there is a scientific sense in which "race" matters—you can track relative distributions of genes that are important, like those for sickle cell anemia or something else, and there are some slight genetic differences in the different pools. We have more intermarriage than we used to, but we still don't have a great deal of intermarriage among these various racial groups, and there's still no scientific way in which it makes sense to think of race. But race is essentially a social construct, and you can see this very clearly when Greeks and Austrians are considered non-white! [laughter]

From census data, you find similar things. Italians are defined by some census enumerators in twentieth-century Nevada as not white. Italians! Because these newcomers disturb you more than some of the other European groups that came over, you initially see this in racist terms, which shows the power of the ideology . . . because, of course, there's no genetic resemblance at all between Serbs and Africans, say.

Another way to understand the concept of race as a social construct is to change commonly used terminology slightly. Several years ago, I attended a meeting of the Sierra Club in San Francisco. The topic under discussion was the tendency of companies to dispose of or produce dangerous materials in low-income communities. This is a way of discriminating against not just people of color, but poor people in general. The club's director told me that his wife had a terminology which referred to people's skin color in terms of two categories—people of *color* and people of *pallor*. The term "people of color" has become widely used in modern society, and to most people it means "people who aren't white." But if you think about it, white people are also people of color; they just have much less pigment than many of the so-called "people of color." I try to make this point when I'm lecturing by holding up a piece of white typing paper. I say, "This is white." Then I hold up my hand and say, "This is not white. This is *pallor*, the relative absence of pigment." The reaction I usually get to that is, more or less, incomprehension, but that is a very profound point.

From the standpoint of a believer in universal human rights, you want to get rid of racism as much as possible. We've done a lot of that in this country, in fact. But, also, studying these matters made me realize that the question of race has deeply shaped both the nonwhite society and the society that considered itself white. You need to recognize that these oppressed minorities of the past have made contributions to your state. But you also need to recognize that racism has been an essential feature of white society, even when it wasn't aware of it. Of course, nonwhites can also be racists. In Nevada, blacks were excluded from almost all businesses in Hawthorne before the passage of the national Civil Rights

Act, and one of the businesses that discriminated against them was a Chinese-American-owned café.

In the 1930s, Julian Steward, an anthropologist at the University of Illinois, did a very good theoretical report about Great Basin natives, mostly the Western Shoshones. It's called *Basin-Plateau Aboriginal Sociopolitical Groups*. Based upon months of travel throughout mostly Western Shoshone country, it includes observations about some Southern Paiute, some Northern Paiutes, and a few Shoshones from Idaho, which is why this wider title, but it's mostly about the Western Shoshones. It's a very good theoretical work.

Steward was supposed to be helping the bureau decide on policy toward Indians, but he had solely academic interests at heart. When somebody asked him for a report on the Western Shoshones, he wrote this report, which was amazing for an anthropologist. (And he was a very good anthropologist.) It was ethnocentric as all get out. Commenting on the question of whether the Western Shoshones could be helped to earn income from their arts and crafts, he said that, basically, the Western Shoshones don't have a culture worth any development or any interest. It was a very unflattering opinion of them.

The head of the Nevada agency at that time, Alida Bowler, read Steward's report and was appalled. She wrote to Collier, and she knew Collier personally, so perhaps he actually read her letter, which I found in his papers in the National Archives. She wrote something like, "This is a report we can't possibly show to the Indians. They would be so disillusioned you couldn't work with them. So suppress this."

The Washington headquarters of the BIA did try to suppress it. They had sent out copies for review to

other BIA local people—one of them was Roy Nash the superintendent of the BIA agency in Sacramento—and now they asked them to send their copies back to Washington. Well, Roy didn't do it; he kept his. And, in fact, when he retired, he took it home with him! Later, he gave it to Neil Humphrey, and Neil put it in our Special Collections at UNR. The first time I read the report was in Special Collections, but it turned out there were other copies. Warren d'Azevedo had a copy; Steve Crom had a copy. And Julian Steward included one in his papers, which he left to the University of Illinois. He wasn't ashamed of it.

I did a paper for an anthropological conference on Steward's report, because I thought people should know what he had to say. I tried to speculate about how it was possible for an anthropologist, of all people—and a very competent one—to be ethnocentric. One of my conclusions is that racism is so deeply embedded that even people in the discipline of modern anthropology—which had *never* been racist—do turn out things like that sometimes.

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I have been quite healthy throughout my life. I had a tonsillectomy when I was in high school; in my forties, I did something stupid and had to have a hernia operation; and occasionally, I would get an infection of some kind. But I've been quite healthy, which I think has contributed to the fact that I could keep working as much as I did. Now, in May of 2004, I am suffering from a debilitating disease from which I will not recover.

About the middle of October of 2003, when Mary and I were back visiting our family in Arlington, Virginia, I began to feel that my legs were getting weak. My son Frank goes off to work every day, and Ruth, my daughter-in-law, works at home, and their kids are in school or nursery school, so when we visit, Mary and I often go into the District of Columbia on weekdays. Sometimes we go to a museum, and I love visiting the National Archives or the Library of Congress to do research. The first day we were there last year, Ruth drove me to the



Ruth and Frank, 1991.

Metro station and I took the Metro into D.C. (Mary felt too tired to accompany me.)

I stayed a while, but I had to come home early—I had neglected to find out whether the National Archives building would be open for research, and it wasn't, because they were doing some kind of renovation. However, they had a brand-new exhibit on the mall side, which is just wonderful, of documents in American history from the standpoint of protecting liberty. So I went to see that. There is also a great new store in the National Archives building, which I visited. Then I returned to Arlington. Well, the Metro station in Arlington is only a mile, roughly, from the family's home, so I walked. When I got home, my legs were really tired, and I said, "This isn't good."

My physician had been urging me for several years to go back to regular exercise. I used to jog several times a week, and then I switched to walking several times a week. I have walked a lot in Reno. But then I stopped doing it several years ago, because I got busy and also because my energy level was beginning to go down, I think. And the nature of the projects I was involved in meant that I couldn't just regularly set aside a time to do

my walking, because that might be the only time that I could meet with somebody on something or other. So I stopped walking.

My physician had been telling me, "You ought to go back to walking," so I thought that was the reason I was fatigued by the short walk home from the Metro station. I immediately resumed regular walking, and I walked something like two-thirds of the days between the middle of October and just before Christmas, when we were back home and the family arrived for the holidays. But my legs kept getting weaker.

I began to realize, around the first of January 2004, that something was seriously wrong. It wasn't just my legs anymore. By then my left arm was weakening too. (It gradually became very weak, and it's practically useless now.) But it took quite a while to have my condition diagnosed—I spent till April 1 trying to find out what it was.

In January I went to my primary care physician, and he gave me the standard blood test panel, a urine test, and an EKG, just in case. None of those turned up anything. I have had to take a little thyroid medication for several years now, but that's the only thing. I always show up very healthy on those kinds of exams.

My doctor then referred me to a neurologist in town, Frank Quaglieri. I couldn't get in to see him for weeks, and then they ran some extra blood tests and other things, and weeks more went by before there was any word. He said, "You've got a neurological disease, but it could be any one of several things, and several of these can be treated." So after running a whole bunch of tests, he ran a test called EMG [Electromyography]. They give you little electrical shocks on the surface of your skin, and then they do the same thing with a pin. They

get down a little bit into the muscle when they give the shocks. If they don't get any response, that means the nerve has died. And that was my problem. (Why the muscle wastes away after the nerve dies, I don't know, but it does.)

Based on the results of the EMG, Dr. Quaglieri strongly suspected that he knew what was wrong with me, but he wasn't sure. So he got an appointment for me at the University of California Hospital in San Francisco, a teaching hospital, which is the best regional hospital around. They have an ALS [Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease] center there that specifically studies that disease and related ones.

I was scheduled to go over there in six weeks, but my son got things hurried up, and on April 1 he flew in to Reno and took me over. They did about four hours of tests, and at the end they said, "You do have ALS. We've ruled out all the other things." So I've actually had the diagnosis only since the first of April. Well, ALS is an untreatable disease. I know that I'm going to die of it; I just don't know exactly when. I don't know, because the progression, or what I prefer to think of as "retrogression," [laughter] is at varying speeds with different people.

Nationally, about 50 percent of folks with ALS die within eighteen months of the diagnosis, so that would tend to suggest that I have some time left. On the other hand, I think the disease is progressing fairly rapidly. This morning I almost couldn't get out of bed by myself. I'm going to go to Arlington on May 8 and live with my son and daughter-in-law, because we think, for a variety of reasons, that would be the best thing to do.

I've been doing a number of things to try to deal with the problems this condition has created. I sent my book on law and race in Nevada up to 1943 to the Uni-

versity of Nevada Press, and I made the final revisions on that, responding to readers' comments. Downstairs, I had ten boxes full of materials that I'd used to write the book. I got those together and cataloged them and sent them to the Nevada Historical Society, which accepted them, so that somebody else could use them in the future.

That book, and the work I did on it, was to be the preparation for a study of the modern civil rights movement in Nevada, the twentieth-century civil rights movement. I've been collecting materials on that from archives and taking interviews and looking up newspaper articles and anything else I could find for years and years. That was the next project I was going to do.

Even before I was diagnosed, I realized I was too ill, so that even if it was treatable, it would be difficult for me to get back to work on a big project like that. So I thought I ought to get together all the materials that I had collected over decades on the modern civil rights movement and put those in the Nevada Historical Society as well. I was beginning to have mobility problems, so I had to have help with cataloging that stuff, but my son found somebody to help me—the wife of one of his old music teachers at Truckee High School.

While in high school, Frank had gotten very close to Barbara and Dick Small. In fact, Barbara told me recently that they regarded Frank as the son they never had. So Frank told them about my situation and about what I was planning to do, and Barbara came over and spent about five days going through these boxes with me, organizing the collection and putting a list of every folder in every box on her computer. I just got it taken to the Nevada Historical Society on Monday of this week. At least I've got that done. Somebody else can use that. And

I've got things on Native American life and politics and law in Nevada, mostly cataloged. The place I want those to go, if they want them, is Special Collections at UNR, because they have a lot more stuff on Native Americans.

One reason that I seem to be reacting to what is happening to me without too much of an emotional problem is that I've had these other things to do. It was important to me, after having spent decades gathering this information, to see to it that it was preserved. My family used to threaten me routinely with throwing everything away if I didn't do anything with it. I know now they realize it is important to me, but it's very difficult for them to cope with, because there's a lot of stuff, and they don't know much about how it's organized. So it was very important to me to do this, and I was very busy with that for a while.

Then this oral history that we are doing came along, and I've been very busy with that. So I have been heavily occupied. Family and friends have been very, very nice to me. I like to say, if I had known how nice people were going to be to me, I might have gotten sick earlier [laughter], because it's been so nice. All of that has made it easier for me to just sort of react to particular things as they occur.

At the hospital in San Francisco, they gave me a fair amount of information about ALS and what they knew about it and what was coming. They don't even know what the cause of it is—they think it has multiple causes. About 10 percent of the people who get ALS have a mutated gene, so they think that's one cause. But that's only 10 percent, and I don't know anyone in my family who has ever had ALS. A lot of research is now going on, but major research apparently didn't start until sometime in

the 1990s on this particular problem. A French physician named Charcot back in about 1850 described it as a discrete disease, so they've known about it for some time, but they don't know much about it.

They have no idea what causes ALS, and they don't have any treatment that can reverse or stop it. There is a drug, which I am taking, called Rilutek, which has been shown in tests to have some effect in slowing the progress of the disease. And they have given me a bunch of other stuff that they think might help. I'm taking an antibiotic that they've discovered works on mice in similar situations, which I call my "mouse drug." [laughter] But they haven't yet done enough testing to know whether it helps with people. I take vitamins and Celebrex. I suspect that the antibiotic is at least as much to avoid your getting infections when your body is weaker because of this; I don't know that.

So I'm taking all this stuff, which keeps me busy, because some of it has to be taken on an empty stomach and some with food. And you have to increase the number of pills or capsules you take at certain intervals. So I've got gotten a pad, and I've written down all this complicated stuff. That keeps me from thinking about myself, as well, because I'm trying to remember, has it been long enough since I've eaten? [laughter] Am I supposed to be taking the Rilutek now, or do I take this? Am I supposed to take it now twice a day? All that kind of junk. [laughter]

I've had to learn about various equipment. I initially had a wheelchair and then was told by the hospital I'd need a more complicated chair, so I got this one that I am sitting in. I started walking with a cane; then I walked with a walker. I had to get a thing to raise the toilet; otherwise I couldn't use it. [laughter] All sorts of things like

that—things I never wanted to know—I had to learn. It has kept me busy.

The knowledge that I'm dying, and I'm not going to be around much longer I didn't anticipate this. We're told that many people take strength from their religion in situations such as this, but I don't think God will take care of me or that I will have an afterlife. I think this is the only one I have. Now, people in the Fellowship and our minister have been very helpful and have contacted me and offered all sorts of things, and that's helpful. The human support from that is very helpful. But my particular religious beliefs don't give me anything.

The Fellowship is a place where all sorts of questions get given attention in one way or another. We have such a wide variety of people, and, as the joke goes a Unitarian-Universalist is somebody who approaches every question with an open mouth. [laughter] We talk about everything. We used to have people make a presentation, then do a question and answer—a Q and A. We now have sermons without a question and answer period, but we also have forums separate from that, which are just discussion things. So we talk about everything.

In the Fellowship we talked about death and dying and what is a rational response to it. Years ago Mary and I both decided on and executed what are called living wills. You state in there that if you get to the point where you're still alive, but you're not basically functioning, you don't want people to make heroic efforts to keep you alive. Just let go. I don't know exactly what that point will be in my case, but I think I'm inclined to draw the line at some point. What you die of in ALS, is your lungs stop working; the muscles that operate the diaphragm and your chest muscles can't operate. They can postpone death by giving you oxygen or, at a later

stage, cutting a hole in your neck, a tracheotomy, and feeding you by tube and giving you more oxygen that way. I think I want to draw the line before that. If that's what I need, they should just let me go. I'm going to ask them, under the living will arrangements, to draw the line at that point.

We had a good friend, Agnes Howell, who was a member of the Fellowship, who also had been important and had done things in the civil rights movement before people in Reno knew it was a civil rights movement. She had a terrible stroke that left her largely incapable of movement, and she had to be hospitalized in nursing homes. She basically couldn't talk, she could just say yes or no and occasionally say something else. Agnes was a member of the Neptune Society. She believed that she ought to have the right to commit suicide in that circumstance.

I would be willing to do that. I'd do that if I could, but there are problems. I've been telling my family the last couple of days, "If you hear of any icebergs going south, put me on one, with a thermos of coffee." [laughter] That's the way I'd rather go than wait for all this other stuff. But nobody has detected the presence of icebergs in the vicinity of the Truckee Meadows as far as I know, ever. [laughter] So that's not going to work.

Well, apparently, a stroke is something I'm going to be spared, but this condition is going to get pretty unpleasant after a while. At that point I would rather ask people to withdraw all life support systems.

We had a Merck Manual, kind of a medical encyclopedia. I looked up my symptoms in it, and read the description of Lou Gehrig's Disease, and it seemed to fit. I thought, "Well, that could be what it is." I began to realize there was a possibility that I had an untreatable

disease, so I had a little while to get used to it. I began to think about all of the problems my natal nuclear family had—my father's early death, my mother's mental and emotional problems . . . and my brother Bill, my one sibling, had schizophrenia and died young of a heart attack that was connected with his illness. There was a lot of suffering. But I was always very lucky.

I remember having a happy childhood. People were always there to take care of me. People made special efforts to make it possible for me to go to college, which made my whole life after that possible. And I've always had good health. I have been very lucky in the midst of suffering, and that may have created some guilt on my part, because there might have been some things I could have done.

As a child, it's not likely I could have done much about whatever my mother's condition was, but I do remember that when I was in high school, I brought a psychologist out to the house to talk with her once. Of course, a brief meeting with a psychologist can't tell much about what is going on. Then there were a couple of times when I probably could have helped my brother. I like to think that I just didn't know for sure what I could do. Being four years younger makes a big difference when you're a child. He was my big brother. He knew everything; I didn't know anything. So I didn't take responsibility there, but there were a couple turning points when I probably could have done something to help him that I didn't, mainly because I didn't know what to do.

In my view of the world, once you make a decision that you want to try to conform to a moral system, there is always some guilt as a result of that. I don't call it original sin, because that has theological meaning that I don't intend, but it does mean that I'm guilty of some-

thing. I don't think I'm being punished by getting ALS because of that, but I've always felt that I didn't do all the things that I could have done in a moral sense.

My first real connection with this way of thinking was through the Fellowship. When you're committed to a moral code, it's not enough simply to not violate the code and hurt people, you also need to do as much as you can to help people. But you can't do all of that; It's impossible! The pool of suffering out there is so vast that you can't do all that you should. And I never made any pretense that I'd done everything that I could to help other people.

I remember the first time this notion ever really became settled in my head: it was the Genovese case. In 1964, Kitty Genovese was stabbed to death on a public street outside an apartment house in New York City. The guy who stabbed her left her there and then came back and stabbed her again, and she wasn't dead until he did it the second time. She was screaming, and people in the apartment house heard her screams and knew something terrible was going on, but nobody called the police or did anything. If they'd called in between the first attack and the second, they might have saved her life. But nobody did. Their moral problem was that they didn't do something positive. None of those people attacked her. None of those people was involved in it, but they didn't do something that might have saved her life. If trying to live a moral life includes that element, then of course we're all guilty. Probably, even Mother Teresa didn't do everything she possibly could in her long life to help the suffering.

I've always had some notion that my imperfection and subsequent guilt, because I didn't live up fully to my moral commitments, shaped my life, too. I think

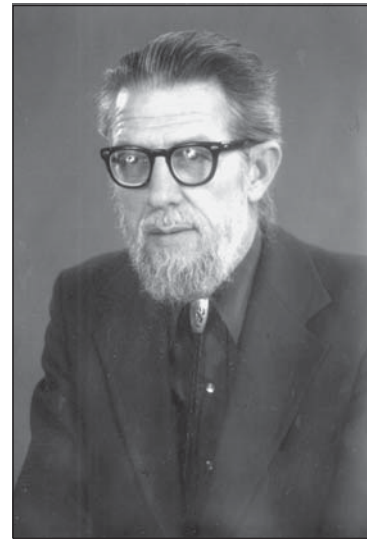
of myself as a necessarily morally flawed person, who has been *very* lucky to get to do a lot of things that a lot of people don't, for a variety of reasons, and is a person who tries from time to time to live up to what he thinks the moral values are that ought to be adhered to. But I never had any notions that I was someone who had never been guilty of anything. I think that that helps one accept the worst. You don't have an exaggerated notion of yourself.

With the time I have left, I'm going to finish organizing the research materials that I've collected, some of which I've used. Then I can find out what the family wants to do with family records. My inclination with those is to put them in archives, so that the family can have access, and anybody else that might be interested can too, but I don't know what my family wants. I've still got a few things like that to do, and I've got a few people I think I should notify about what is happening with me. Various friends have said they are grateful that I told them in advance, rather than just reading in the paper one day that I was gone. [laughter] I've still got a few people I need to contact.

I thought until a couple of weeks ago I might take up tap dancing, but that's out now. [laughter] I can't do that. There are a number of things I've never done, some of which I learned long ago that I didn't want to do. These include arm wrestling with rattlesnakes and wearing tuxedos. I've never worn a tuxedo in my life. Under the right circumstances, I might have put one on, but that's not my idea of what I should do, and I haven't. I haven't learned to fly an airplane. I never learned to read music, which is odd, because I can hear music very well. I love classical music, and I love a number of other kinds of music. (I can tell the difference between Bach and Bacharach. [laughter] There's no comparison. Bach has it hands down.)

Although I have just now realized consciously that I am doing this, during my illness I have sought out ways to make jokes about it. Years ago, I learned the value of humor. I got this from Jim Hulse, who usually makes witty remarks as part of anything he says publicly. If you make jokes, particularly self-deprecating ones, everybody benefits. Almost everybody likes to laugh, so almost everyone will listen more readily to what you say if you preface it with a joke. It has even been established through scholarly studies that humor is good for you.

Making deprecatory jokes about yourself not only pleases others, it also helps you avoid thinking too highly of yourself. The *Academic Marketplace* is a book from which I learned quite a bit. One of its most interesting findings was that while samples of academic departments in many disciplines tended to agree on which were the best departments around the country, almost all valued their own departments somewhat more highly than others did! This is a problem almost all of us share. But if you look for things about yourself that are not admirable, and then joke about them, you remind yourself that you aren't quite so good as you think you are. For example, for some time I have made jokes about my beard and clothing choices, because I am aware that these are somewhat below many people's expectations. [laughter]



Beard and clothing choices. Below expectations?

Basically, what I'd like to do with my remaining time is continue some of my research and writing. Mary and I did some studies together of the Unitarian woman minister who was in Reno in the 1890s, Mila Tupper Maynard. Her sisters were all very interesting people. One was also a Unitarian minister. Another was one of the first faculty members at the University of Nevada when it moved from Elko to Reno, which is probably a reason why Mila Tupper Maynard came to Reno. We've got quite a bit of stuff on her and her sisters. It's not clear whether that's worth a book, whether she's important enough or whether everything can be related well enough that it seems like a subject of a separate study. But I'm hoping to take that with me to Arlington and see if I can do some writing while I'm there. And then Mary can come back occasionally, and we can work on it together. But I don't, really, have anything else I want to do.

There are an awful lot of things I haven't done in life. The Weaver family that took care of me as a kid had the idea, which I think is correct, that the potential every human being has is much greater than anything they ever realize. Even if you get various chances to develop your capacities in several different lines, you can never do them all. I could have learned a number of things that I don't know how to do.

When you realize that you can't do everything, its easier to accept not having done everything. Especially if you have applied yourself, to the best of your ability, to the things you have chosen to do. There is also something I learned from Epicurus, one of the Greek philosophers. (For some reason, today the word "epicurean" means exactly the opposite of what he actually stood for, according to the various snippets that have survived of what he wrote.) Epicurus taught that if you

want to be satisfied with your condition, there are two things you must do: you have to decide what you want, and then you have to evaluate honestly what it is you have. [laughter] This was all under the rubric of happiness. Whether you're happy or not, in terms of your feelings, is basically a matter of whether you are doing what you want to do—whether you have accomplished what you want to accomplish. So you can get more happiness either by getting more of whatever it was you wanted, or by lowering your expectations.

So, if you're Richard Nixon, for example—and Richard Nixon is not one of my favorite people. Well, I don't hate anybody, but I sort of despise him. [laughter] Richard Nixon illustrated that beautifully. After his reelection as president, he had gone as high as it is possible to go in elected politics. He had a very high income. He had a lot of prestige. But he went into depression after winning this election and rising to this point. Apparently, the reason was that he wanted everything. He wanted not just to be the leader of the Free World, and earn over $100,000 a year plus expense accounts, live in a fancy house, have a huge airplane at his command, and have lots of people around to take his orders . . . he wanted to be really rich! That, in my opinion, is why he cheated on his income tax. He claimed a higher monetary value than was allowed for his vice-presidential papers, even though he had personally signed a law limiting such claims, but it didn't occur to him that there was anything wrong with doing it illegally. The only reason I can think of why he would do that is that he really thought he should be rich.

That's an illustration of what I learned from Epicurus. If you can keep your expectations of life down, whether it's in material terms or whatever it is you

want I wanted to do things that would help the community. If you want to do that and be recognized for it on, say, a national or international level, then the chances are very great that you're going to be unhappy! [laughter] I have some abilities and had some opportunity to develop some of them, but I don't have the capacity to create something like, say, Amnesty International, if it didn't already exist. If I couldn't be happy in community service without doing something spectacular like that, then, obviously, I was going to be unhappy. There is no single measurement of happiness in this way of looking at things. It depends on whether you are relatively close to what you have wanted. I am, and I'm happy.

Since becoming an environmentalist, I have tried at various times to cut back on demands on nature—the simple life orientation. I used to do vegetable gardening, partly because that was the most relaxing thing I ever found to do, but partly also because raising your own food is a good idea from this point of view. We have a solar quilt on our big picture window that is designed partly to save energy. We have solar panels on the garage, which heat our water. And it was not a matter of saving money, it was a matter of saving energy. For a while I was trying to figure out how to live the simple life as something I could do toward helping the environment, which is similar to the epicurean notion. Reducing your expectations in material terms has some significance to preserving the environment, but mostly it is a matter of your satisfaction with yourself.

Bill Miller is a guy in the Fellowship who does programs on death and dying and grieving. Last fall he gave a sermon to the Fellowship. One of the things he said

during the course of it was that some Buddhist had told him that only in America is death regarded as optional. [laughter] And there is something to that. It's funny, but there's something to that. We tend to think if somebody is dying of a disease, it's because we haven't yet found how to cure that disease. The viewpoint that Americans have is that we ought to be able to defeat death on every battlefield. No, no, no. You can't do that. [laughter]

It's the nature of all living things to live a fixed time and then die. We're not going to defeat death. We're not going to achieve immortality. Maybe someday they will find out what ALS is and find a cure for it, but they haven't yet, and I doubt that in the amount of time I have left, anybody's going to come up with something. I don't like this particular way of going, but that's the way it is, and I don't have any choice. So, why get upset about something you can't do anything about, which you knew was inevitable in some form or another *anyway*?

I hope I don't have a lot of pain. I hope I don't have a lot of gasping for breath at the end, which they tell me you don't. I hope that's right. [laughter] But I can't do anything about it. What I can do are things that are important to me, such as sharing with family and friends and archiving the materials for some of the projects that I didn't finish, so that others can do research with them. That's the way I'm looking at the next few months.

My views about truth and knowledge are basically those of a skeptic, but I picked certain things to believe in from various options in the Western tradition—notions about how things work, but also moral questions. Then I tried to integrate these beliefs into my work and

my life. There are very good reasons for believing in proximate truths about "factual" issues like the death penalty or the class system, but my beliefs do constitute a religious faith. If they are not correct, they can be disproved, and I will accept that I was wrong. The same thing with values.

My strongest values were formed by events in my life. When that black man in Newport News had to give up his seat simply because he had a black face and I had a white face, it didn't take me long to figure out that the system that required that was wrong. That was a moral revelation. I didn't need to have it proved absolutely. What Universal Unitarianism calls the "inherent worth and dignity of every person" is something you just believe in. My life in scholarship, combined with what happened to me in the world, led me to adopt a gradually widening range of proximate truths as the basis for my actions, both in my professional life and my wider life. People who need more certainty would be puzzled by this, but it makes sense to me.

My approach to these matters, which developed slowly over the years, comes from the previously cited quote from Rousseau, "All of my ideas are consistent, but I cannot express them all at once." A number of things that I've done, either intellectually or in terms of actual living in the world, have been developed from things that were initially indiscernible to me, and therefore inexpressible. I was connecting up things that had always been part of me, but that I hadn't understood before, which is perhaps what Rousseau meant.

So . . . I have strong beliefs, but I've never been at risk of becoming a fanatic. The content of what fanatics believe is less important than the fact that they believe it

fanatically, with no respect for reason. No matter what its motives, and no matter what cause it claims to advance, fanaticism is a very dangerous phenomenon.

As a scholar and would-be intellectual, I've enthusiastically pursued knowledge for most of my life, but I accept that absolute knowledge is not possible for human beings, either through faith or science, which is the twentieth-century incarnation of the "reason" of the Enlightenment philosophers. Reverend Bill Schultz was the national president of our Unitarian Universalist Association for two terms, and a couple of years ago, speaking at one of our General Assemblies, he told a story that illustrates what I mean:

A famous rabbi, who was well loved by his congregation, was dying. At one point toward the end, a lot of people from the synagogue gathered around his bed. Of course, the elders were up by the front of the bed, and one of them said to him, "Rabbi, you have given us so much wisdom over the years. Can you answer one more question?"

The rabbi could barely respond, but he whispered, "Yes, yes, go ahead."

The elder asked, "What is the meaning of life?"

There was a long delay. They were afraid maybe the rabbi hadn't heard or wasn't going to answer. Then he said, "Life is like a river."

He said this in a very weak voice, so the people around him repeated his words through the crowd. Everybody said, "The rabbi says life is like a river!"

This revelation got repeated all the way to the back, where it reached the "schlemiel." (In Yiddish, a schlemiel is a person who's not quite with it, an unlucky

bungler, a chump.) The schlemiel said, "What does it mean, 'Life is like a river?'"

The elder at the head of the bed said, "Rabbi, the schlemiel wants to know, what does it mean, 'Life is like a river?'"

There was silence for awhile Then the rabbi says "So, life is *not* like a river."

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